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## MA [English]

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# INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS

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# INTRODUCTION



Although language has been an object of attention for many philosophers from the times of Aristotle and Plato, it has received more attention recently due to the focus on its scientific aspects. Language is arbitrary, productive, creative, systematic, vocalic, social, non-instinctive and conventional. These features are what sets human language apart from animal language. Linguistics refers to the scientific study of human language. It assists in understanding the language structure and focuses on the system of rules followed by the speakers and listeners of a language. It is divided into the following modules: Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics and Semiotics. Phonetics is also a related branch of linguistics that is based on the actual properties of speech.

This book contains topics such as laws of phonetics, varieties of English, speech mechanism, branches of Linguistics, theories of semantics and prosodic features such as word stress, rhythm and intonation as well as constituents of a basic sentence structure.

This book, *Introduction to Linguistics,* is divided into fourteen units that follow the self-instruction mode with each unit beginning with an Introduction to the unit, followed by an outline of the Objectives. The detailed content is then presented in a simple but structured manner interspersed with Check Your Progress Questions to test the student's understanding of the topic. A Summary along with a list of Key Words and a set of Self Assessment Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit for recapitulation.

NOTES

# BLOCK - I
# BASICS OF ENGLISH

# UNIT 1 DESCENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**Structure**



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The English language has been traced to three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century A.D. Over the years, the English language has changed and simplified itself, as opposed to the more inflected forms that were seen in Old English. Today, English has acquired a special position as a global language. In the multicultural and multilingual environment of India, English has proven to become a link language. Not only has it opened various avenues of opportunities, but it has also become a language of advancement and modernity. This unit will discuss the origin of the English language and its position in a country like India.

## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the origin of the English Language
- Understand the place of English in the Indo-European family of languages
- Examine the place of English in India

## 1.2 ORIGIN AND PLACE OF ENGLISH IN INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

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The English language is a West Germanic language of the Indo-European language family. Closely associated with the Frisian, German and Dutch languages, the English language originated in England. Today, it is widely spoken around the world and is the dominant language of countries like the United States, Australia, Canada, etc. Historically, English language has been traced to three Germanic tribes, namely the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. These tribes invaded Britain during the 5th century AD. The Angles spoke a language known as 'Englisc', from which the terms 'England' and 'English' are derived.

As English belongs to the Indo-European family of languages, it finds similarities with other languages spoken in Europe and western Asia from Iceland to India. The parent tongue Proto-Indo-European was in prevalence about 5,000 years ago and is believed to have been spoken by nomads who roamed the southeast European plains. Germanic originated from this ancestral speech and is the language from which English originated.

It is to be noted that Modern English is analytic. On the other hand, the parent tongue Proto-Indo-European was inflected or synthetic. Slowly and gradually, over the course of years, English words have simplified from the inflected variable forms found in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Russian, and German, toward invariable forms, as in Chinese and Vietnamese. Nouns, pronouns (as in he, him, his), adjectives (as in big, bigger, biggest), and verbs are inflected in English. Furthermore, English is the only European language to employ uninflected adjectives: for example, the tall man, the tall woman, etc. As for verbs, if the Modern English word 'ride' is compared with the corresponding words in Old English and Modern German, it is found that English now has only 5 forms (ride, rides, rode, riding, ridden), whereas Old English ridan had 13, and Modern German reiten has 16.

### 1.2.1 Place of English in India

In the multilingual context, the English language has acquired a special position in India. It is no longer seen as a foreign language, rather it is the associate language in India and its acquisition is a matter of pride in the society.

English Language was first introduced by the British in India with the sole purpose of making their administration of this country easier and efficient by harnessing the human resource available. The intentions as expressed by Macaulay were 'to prepare a class of people who will be Indian in their origin but English in their thought, belief and behaviour'.

After the attainment of independence, drastic change in the outlook of our thinkers and other stakeholders took place with regard to the place of English in

the school curriculum. The government of India appointed several commissions, from time to time, to study the whole structure of education and suggest measures for its improvement. The issue of the place of English was of central concern in the reports of these commissions.

English has acquired a special position for itself in this part of the world, in India it enjoys the status of an associate language, and it is seen as a language of multiple opportunities. Its use has become a necessity by compulsion as reflected in the words of our first prime minister:

> 'If you push out English, does Hindi fully take its place? I hope it will, I am sure it will. But I wish to avoid the danger of one unifying factor being pushed out without another unifying factor fully taking its place. In that event there will be a gap, a hiatus. The creation of any such hiatus or gap must be avoided at all costs. It is very vital to do so in the interest of the unity of the country. It is this that leads me to the conclusion that English is likely to have an important place in the foreseeable future.' – Shri Jawaharlal Nehru

The role of English in India is emphatically mentioned in the opening chapter of the Position paper on Teaching of English (National Curriculum Framework 2005). The same is reproduced here for your reference:

> 'English is in India today, a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life. Its colonial origins now forgotten or irrelevant, its initial role in independent India, tailored to higher education (as a 'library language', a 'window on the world'), now felt to be insufficiently inclusive socially and linguistically, the current status of English stems from its overwhelming presence on the world stage and the reflection of this in the national arena. It is predicted that by 2010, a surge in English-language learning will include a third of the world's people (Graddol 1997). The opening up of the Indian economy in the 1990s has coincided with an explosion in the demand for English in our schools because English is perceived to open up opportunities (Das 2005).' - *Position Paper on Teaching of English (Chapter 1, ' A Global Language in Multilingual Country page 1, 2006)*

Discussed below are some of the features of the English Language:

English is the Unifying Language - It Acts Both as a National and International Link Language

India with its multicultural and multilingual heritage always faced the challenge of accepting any one language which would unify the people of different states. English language was accepted and promoted in various schools of our country. The idea of introducing English Language in the curriculum has been to promote 'additive bilingualism' rather than 'subtractive bilingualism'. Indians are able to link well with others states of the country and other countries of the world because of understanding the English Language.

**English is the Language of International Politics, Trade, Commerce and Industry**

Most of the communication happening around the world in the field of politics, trade, commerce and industry, takes place in English. Therefore, if somebody aspires to carve a success story in any of these areas he/she must be proficient in the English Language.

**English is Perceived to Open up Opportunities**

In India, it is believed that if one is proficient in the English Language, there will be ample of opportunities for placement in big multinational companies (David Graddol, 2010).

**English is believed to Aid Social Mobility at Global Level**

Youths aspire to move to other parts of the world due to work or to settle down. In order to get placed abroad, people usually have to clear TOEFL and/or GRE with a decent score. Hence, it becomes crucial to learn the English Language for social mobility.

**English is a Library Language- The Key to the Storehouse of Knowledge**

The English language has invariably acquired the status of being the library language in the world, as much of the literature in various disciplines is available in the English Language. Hence, in pursuit of knowledge and excellence in any discipline, lack of English Language skills are a major hindrance.

**English is a Window to Understand the Rapid Progress of Technology and Scientific Knowledge Constantly taking Place in the World**

Latest advancements in science and technology (Information Technology) is available in English language, thus, it becomes necessary for the IT savvy generation to be well versed in the use of English language.

**English is the Lingua Franca of India**

English has become the binding language in India.

**English is seen as a Language of Change - 'Modernity'**

The English language is seen as the language of advancement and social change. Hence, it becomes imperative for all those looking forward to social change, to acquire the English language. Reading English Literature and using English language becomes instrumental in changing one's mind-set.

**English is linked with 'Quality'**

The English medium schools in India are proliferating as they are associated with 'high' quality of teaching. It is assumed by many that these schools maintain high

standards of quality. Commenting on the perception of Indian parents on ELT it was reported in a study:

> *'English is seen not just as a useful skill, but as a symbol of a better life, a pathway out of poverty and oppression'* (David Graddol, 2010)

This quote in itself truly reflects the role of English language among people in India.

**Check Your Progress**

1. To which language family does the English language belong?
2. Name the three Germanic tribes that invaded England during the 5th century A.D.
3. Which language is the word 'English' and 'England' derived from?
4. How many forms of the word 'ride' are there in Modern English, as opposed to Old English and Modern German?
5. Why was English introduced by the British in India?
6. How does English provide the means for social mobility in India?
7. Why is English language considered a library language?

## 1.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The English language is a West Germanic language of the Indo-European language family.
2. Three Germanic tribes that invaded England during the 5th century A.D. were Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes.
3. The Angles spoke a language known as 'Englisc', from which the terms 'England' and 'English' are derived.
4. Modern English has only 5 forms (ride, rides, rode, riding, ridden) of the word 'ride', whereas Old English ridan had 13, and Modern German reiten has 16.
5. English Language was first introduced by the British in India with the sole purpose of making their administration of this country easier and efficient by harnessing the human resource available.
6. Youths aspire to move to other parts of the world due to work or to settle down. In order to get placed abroad, people usually have to clear TOEFL and/or GRE with a decent score. Hence, it becomes crucial to learn the English Language. In this way, English language provides social mobility.

7. The English language has invariably acquired the status of being the library language in the world, as much of the literature in various disciplines is available in the English Language.

NOTES

## 1.4 SUMMARY

- The English language is a West Germanic language of the Indo-European language family. Closely associated with the Frisian, German and Dutch languages, the English language originated in England.
- Historically, English language has been traced to three Germanic tribes, namely the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. These tribes invaded Britain during the 5th century AD.
- The parent tongue Proto-Indo-European was in prevalence about 5,000 years ago and is believed to have been spoken by nomads who roamed the southeast European plains. Germanic originated from this ancestral speech and is the language from which English originated.
- It is to be noted that Modern English is analytic. On the other hand, the parent tongue Proto-Indo-European was inflected or synthetic. Slowly and gradually, over the course of years, English words have simplified from the inflected variable forms found in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Russian, and German, toward invariable forms, as in Chinese and Vietnamese.
- English Language was first introduced by the British in India with the sole purpose of making their administration of this country easier and efficient by harnessing the human resource available. The intentions as expressed by Macaulay were 'to prepare a class of people who will be Indian in their origin but English in their thought, belief and behaviour'.
- India with its multicultural and multilingual heritage always faced the challenge of accepting any one language which would unify the people of different states. English language was accepted and promoted in various schools of our country. The idea of introducing English Language in the curriculum has been to promote 'additive bilingualism' rather than 'subtractive bilingualism'.
- English is the language of international politics, trade, commerce and industry. Most of the communication happening around the world in the field of politics, trade, commerce and industry, takes place in English.
- In India, it is believed that if one is proficient in the English Language, there will be ample of opportunities for placement in big multinational companies.
- Youths aspire to move to other parts of the world due to work or to settle down. In order to get placed abroad, people usually have to clear TOEFL and/or GRE with a decent score. Hence, it becomes crucial to learn the English Language for social mobility.

- The English language has invariably acquired the status of being the library language in the world, as much of the literature in various disciplines is available in the English Language.
- Latest advancements in science and technology (Information Technology) is available in English language, thus, it becomes necessary for the IT savvy generation to be well versed in the use of English language.

## 1.5 KEY WORDS

- **Bilingualism:** It is the phenomenon of speaking and understanding two or more languages.
- **Curriculum:** It refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program.
- **Lingua franca:** It is a shared language of communication used by people who are speakers of different languages.

## 1.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the origin of English language.
2. Differentiate between Modern English and the parent tongue Proto-Indo-European.
3. Write a short note on the change in position of English in India after independence.
4. What are the opportunities provided by learning of English in India?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss in detail the history of the English language.
2. Examine the impact of India's multicultural and multilingual heritage on the English language.
3. Explain the role of English language in India.

## 1.7 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

Jindal, D.V. and Pushpinder Syal. 2007. *An Introduction to Linguistics: Language, Grammar and Semantics.* New Delhi: PHI Learning.

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Baugh, A.C. and Thomas Cable. 1993. *A History of the English Language.* New Delhi: Taylor and Francis.

# UNIT 2 WORD MAKING IN ENGLISH AND CHANGES IN MEANING OF WORDS

**Structure**



## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

No language is complete in itself in terms of its vocabulary. Every language borrows from the language it comes in contact with to enrich its vocabulary. But apart from borrowing there are other ways in which a language tries to enrich its stock of words that is by coining new words through various means, such as Inflection, Derivation, compounding, back-formation, clipping, etc. English language is also similar in terms of its enriching in vocabulary. In this unit, we will discuss the various morphological processes of English language. The changes in meaning of words will also be examined.

## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the word formation process
- Explain how the meaning of words have changed over a period of time

## 2.2 WORD MAKING IN ENGLISH

Apart from borrowing loanwords from other tongues, the English language has enriched its resources by making of new words. The new words are formed in three ways:

(a) Composition

(b) Derivation and

(c) Root creation

When two existing words are joined together, it gives rise to a new word. It is called composition. For example, apple-tree, Blackbird, downfall, breakfast, spendthrift, turnkey, break up and knock out. The second type of words is formed by creating a new word from the old word by means of the addition of prefix and suffix. For example, anti-slavery, enliven, ex-king, actively, graceful, hardly, etc. The third method is the invention of an entirely new word usually either imitative of some inarticulate noise or suggested by some instinctive feeling of expressiveness. For example, blob, flip, flap hug, see-saw, squander, thump, etc.

The new words are also created based on the proper nouns. Certain words like boycott, derrick, lynch, nicotine, ohm, guy, sandwich are created on the basis of names. Some words are formed from the geographical names. They are bikini, denim, cheddar, hamburger, jean, port, china, turkey. Certain new words are based on literature, folklore, commercial brand names such as atlas, chimera, morphine, panic, nemesis, band-aid, Xerox, zipper.

### Word Making in English – Different Processes

As suggested earlier, borrowings from other languages are one of the chief means of enriching the vocabulary of a language. Similar is true for the English Language as much of the words of English are taken from other languages. For Example, skunk, tomato (from indigenous languages of the Americas), sushi, taboo, wok (from Pacific Rim languages), chic, macho, spaghetti, dirndl, psychology, telephone, physician, education (from European languages), hummus, chutzpah, cipher, artichoke (from Semitic languages), yam, tote, banana (from African languages).

In the present context, we will be discussing other ways in which the English language has enriched itself by different morphological processes as when we will come to the unit on Foreign elements in English, we will be discussing borrowings in a much more detailed fashion.

### Derivational and inflectional morphemes

The affixes, that is, prefixes and suffixes, which make up the category of bound morphemes, can be divided into two groups –Derivational morphemes and inflectional morphemes.

### English inflectional morphology

English has three categories of meaning which are expressed inflectionally – **number** in nouns, **tense/aspect** in verbs, and **comparison** in adjectives.

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***Table 2.1*** *Inflectional Categories in English*

| Word class to which inflection applies | Inflectional category | Regular affix used to express category | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nouns | Number | -s, -es | book**s**, bush**es** |
| Nouns | Possessive | -'s, -' | Ravi's book, schools' manifesto |
| Verbs | Third person singular present | -s, -es | it rain**s**, karim write**s**, |
| Verbs | past tense | -ed | Paint**ed** |
| Verbs | perfect aspect | -ed | paint**ed** ('has **painted**) (past participle) |
| Verbs | progressive or continuous aspect | -ing | falling, (present participle) |
| Adjectives | comparative | -er | Tall**er** |
| Adjectives | superlative | -est | Tall**est** |

English inflectional morphology is irregular in some ways:

***Table 2.2*** *Irregular Inflectional Morphology*

| Type of irregularity | Noun plurals | Verbs: past tense | Verbs: past participle |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unusual suffix | ox**en**, syllab**i**, antenn**ae** | | tak**en**, see**n**, fall**en**, eat**en** |
| Change of stem vowel | foot/f**ee**t, mouse/m**i**ce | run/r**a**n, come/c**a**me, flee/fl**e**d, meet/m**e**t, fly/fl**ew**, stick/st**u**ck, get/g**o**t, break/br**o**ke | swim/sw**u**m, sing/s**u**ng |
| Change of stem vowel with unusual suffix | brother/br**e**th**ren**/ | feel/f**elt**, kneel/kne**lt** | write/wr**itten**, do/d**one**, break/br**oken**, fly/fl**own** |
| Change in base/stem form (sometimes with unusual suffix) | | send/sen**t**, bend/ben**t**, think/th**ought**, teach/t**aught**, buy/b**ought** | send/sen**t**, bend/ben**t**, think/th**ought**, teach/t**aught**, buy/b**ought** |
| Zero-marking (no suffix, no stem change) | deer, sheep, moose, fish | hit, beat | hit, beat, come |

Inflection can be irregular in more ways such as **Suppletion** (instead of a suffix, the whole word changes):

be - am - are - is - was - were - been

go - went - gone

good - better - best

bad - worse - worst

some - more - most

### English derivational morphology

There are many derivational affixes in English. Some of them are discussed below, as examples.

***Table 2.3*** *Derivational Affixes of English*

| Affix | Class(es) of word to which affix applies | Nature of change in meaning | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Prefix 'non-' | Noun, adjective | Negation/opposite | Noun: **non-**starter<br>Adj.: **non-**partisan |
| Suffix 'ity' | Adjective | Changes to noun | electric/electric**ity**<br>obese/obes**ity** |
| Prefix 'un-' | Verb<br>Adjective | Reverses action<br>opposite quality | tie/**un**tie, fasten/**un**fasten<br>clear/**un**clear, safe/**un**safe |
| Suffix '-ous' | Noun | Changes to adjective | fame/fam**ous**,<br>glamour/glamor**ous** |
| Prefix 're-' | Verb | Repeat action | tie/**re**tie, write/**re**write |
| Suffix '-able' | Verb | Changes to adjective | print/print**able**,<br>drink/drink**able** |

### Important to Note

The difference between derivational and inflectional morphemes is worth emphasizing. An inflectional morpheme never changes the grammatical category of a word. For example, both *old* and *older* are adjectives. The *-er* inflection here simply creates a different version of the adjective. However, a derivational morpheme can change the grammatical category of a word. The verb *teach* becomes the noun *teacher* if we add the derivational morpheme *-er* (from Old English *-ere*). So, the suffix *-er* in modern English can be an inflectional morpheme as part of an adjective and also a distinct derivational morpheme as part of a noun. Just because they look the same (*-er*) doesn't mean they do the same kind of work. Whenever there is a derivational suffix and an inflectional suffix attached to the same word, they always appear in that order. First the derivational (*-er*) is attached to *teach*, then the inflectional (*-s*) is added to produce *teachers*.

### Compounding

After Derivation and Inflection, one of the most significant processes of word formation is Compounding. It is a process where two or more than two free morphemes or words are joined together to form a new word.

| **Examples** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Noun Compounds | Noun + Noun | Ice-cream |
| | Adjective + noun | Blackboard |
| | Verb + Noun | Breakfast, Pick pocket |
| Adjective Compounds | Noun + Adjective | Tax-free, Water proof |
| | Adjective + adjective | Icy-cold |
| | Verb + Adjective | Freezing-cold |
| Verb Compounds | Noun + Verb | Brain-wash |
| | Adjective + Verb | Dry-clean |
| | Verb + Verb | Sleep-walk |

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**Another Example: where we can carry on lengthening the compound by adding more and more free morphemes.**

trade-union

trade-union delegate

trade union-delegate assembly

trade union-delegate-assembly-leader

### Zero Derivation (Conversion or Functional shift)

In zero derivation, no affixes are added and a word of one category is simply used as a word of another category.

**Examples:** Noun-verb: comb, sand, knife, butter, referee, proposition.

Adjective – Noun: Criminal, noble, daily, annual etc.

- **Stress shift:** No affix is added to the base, but the stress is shifted from one syllable to the other. With the stress shift comes a change in category.

| **Noun** | **Verb** |
|---|---|
| cómbine | combíne |
| ímplant | implánt |
| réwrite | rewríte |
| tránsport | transpórt |
| **Noun** | **Adjective** |
| cóncrete | concréte |
| ábstract | abstráct |

- **Clipping**: It refers to the shortening of a polysyllabic word to create a new word where the clipped word is used more. Examples: bro (brother), pro (professional), prof (professor), math (mathematics), fridge (refrigerator).
- **Acronym formation**: It refers to the formation of words from the initials of a group of words that designate one concept, usually capitalized. An acronym is pronounced as a word if the consonants and vowels line up in such a way as to make this possible; otherwise it is pronounced as a string of letter names. Examples: NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), RADAR (Radio Detecting and Ranging) Laser (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation), etc.
- **Blending**: Parts of two words are put together to form a new word. Examples: motel (motor + hotel) brunch (breakfast + lunch), smog (smoke + fog), telethon (television + marathon), modem (modulator + demodulator), Hinglish (Hindi & English).

**NOTES**

| **Example from literary writing** |
|---|
| Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass refers to many such words – "slithy" (lithe + Slimy), "Mimsy" ( Flimsy + miserable) "Chortle" (chuckle + snort) |

- **Backformation**: A suffix identifiable from other words is cut off from a base which has previously not been a word; that base then is used as a root, and becomes a word through widespread use. Examples: pronunciate (< pronunciation < pronounce), resurrect (< resurrection), enthuse (< enthusiasm), self-destruct (< self-destruction < destroy), burgle (< burglar), burger (< hamburger), hawk (<hawker), etc.
- **Generification or Adoption of brand names as common words**: A brand name becomes the name for the item or process associated with the brand name. The word ceases to be capitalized and acts as a normal verb/noun (i.e. takes inflections such as plural or past tense). Examples: Xerox, Kleenex, band-aid, etc.
- **Onomatopoeia**: Words are invented which (to native speakers at least) sound like the sound they name or the entity which produces the sound. Examples: hiss, sizzle, cuckoo, cock-a-doodle-doo, buzz, beep, ding-dong.
- **Reduplication**: It is a process wherein a part of the whole of a word is repeated to indicate meaning like plurality, repetition, customary activity, added emphasis, etc. Examples: tick-tick (of clocks), Clunk-clunk (of oars) Quack-quack, pretty-pretty, goody-goody, etc.

There are other ways of making new words such as Abbreviations and Orthographic Abbreviations. Examples of Abbreviations are CD (compact disc), PC (Personal Computer) etc. In Orthographic Abbreviations, we write the acronymic form but speak the full form such as Dr. Mr. Mrs. etc. Thus, various processes of word formation enrich the vocabulary of a language. English language similarly has been enriched in the course of its history from being the language of the lower class in England during the Medieval Age to a global language in the present context where it now has a supremacy over all other languages of the world.

## 2.3 CHANGES IN THE MEANING OF WORDS

In the last section, we have already seen that Language is always in a constant process of evolution as new words and grammatical rules keep on changing over a period of time with the usage as human beings keep on making smaller changes in language use for their convenience. In the present section, we will be looking at the ways in which words have changed meanings over a period of time.

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Let us begin with a list of some of the English words which has changed drastically so as to understand the extent of the changes in meaning that one can perceive when one studies a language historically.

Some Words that have changed meaning very drastically

**Nice**: This word used to mean 'silly, foolish, simple'. Far from the compliment it is today!

**Silly**: Meanwhile, *silly* went in the opposite direction: in its earliest uses, it referred to things worthy or blessed; from there it came to refer to the weak and vulnerable, and more recently to those who are foolish.

**Awful**: Awful things used to be 'worthy of awe' for a variety of reasons, which is how we get expressions like 'the awful majesty of God'.

**Fizzle**: The verb *fizzle* once referred to the act of producing quiet flatulence (think 'SBD'); American college slang flipped the word's meaning to refer to failing at things.

**Wench**: A shortened form of the Old English word *wenchel* (which referred to children of either sex), the word *wench* used to mean 'female child' before it came to be used to refer to female servants — and more pejoratively to wanton women.

**Fathom**: It can be hard to fathom how this verb moved from meaning 'to encircle with one's arms' to meaning 'to understand after much thought'. Here's the scoop: One's outstretched arms can be used as a measurement (a fathom), and once you have fathoms, you can use a fathom line to measure the depth of water. Think metaphorically and fathoming becomes about getting to the bottom of things.

**Clue**: Centuries ago, a clue (or clew) was a ball of yarn. Think about threading your way through a maze and you'll see how we got from yarn to key bits of evidence that help us solve things.

**Myriad**: If you had a myriad of things 600 years ago, it meant that you specifically had 10,000 of them — not just a lot.

**Naughty**: Long ago, if you were naughty, you had naught or nothing. Then it came to mean evil or immoral, and now you are just badly behaved.

**Eerie**: Before the word *eerie* described things that inspire fear, it used to describe people feeling fear — as in one could feel faint and eerie.

**Spinster**: As it sounds, spinsters used to be women who spun. It referred to a legal occupation before it came to mean 'unmarried woman' — and often not in the most positive ways, as opposed to a bachelor.

**Bachelor**: A bachelor was a young knight before the word came to refer to someone who had achieved the lowest rank at a university — and it lives on in that meaning in today's B.A. and B.S degrees. It's been used for unmarried men since Chaucer's day.

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**Flirt**: Some 500 years ago, flirting was flicking something away or flicking open a fan or otherwise making a brisk or jerky motion. Now it involves playing with people's emotions (sometimes it may feel like your heart is getting jerked around in the process).

**Guy**: This word is an eponym. It comes from the name of Guy Fawkes, who was part of a failed attempt to blow up Parliament in 1605. Folks used to burn his effigy, a 'Guy Fawkes' or a 'guy', and from there it came to refer to a frightful figure. In the U.S., it has come to refer to men in general.

**Hussy**: Believe it or not, *hussy* comes from the word *housewife* (with several sound changes, clearly) and used to refer to the mistress of a household, not the disreputable woman it refers to today.

**Egregious**: It used to be possible for it to be a good thing to be egregious: it meant you were distinguished or eminent. But in the end, the negative meaning of the word won out, and now it means that someone or something is conspicuously bad — not conspicuously good.

**Quell**: Quelling something or someone used to mean killing it, not just subduing it.

**Divest**: 300 years ago, divesting could involve undressing as well as depriving others of their rights or possessions. It has only recently come to refer to selling off investments.

**Senile**: *Senile* used to refer simply to anything related to old age, so you could have senile maturity. Now it refers specifically to those suffering from senile dementia.

**Meat**: Have you ever wondered about the expression 'meat and drink'? It comes from an older meaning of the word *meat* that refers to food in general — solid food of a variety of kinds (not just animal flesh), as opposed to drink.

Source: https://ideas.ted.com/20-words-that-once-meant-something-very-different/

The above list of words which has changed meaning drastically probably have given you a notion that the changes are not so subtle and that these changes are sometimes very extreme and it may change the meaning to such an extent that what a word meant at one point of time, it may be reversed altogether. As language develops according to its usage, it is evident that language will constantly change its contours of meaning. It is a very interesting branch of diachronic study of language, often comes under the banner of Philology, and should be studied to acquaint ourselves with the ways in which we also are a part of this change of meaning processes of language, especially English language.

**Check Your Progress**

1. What is compounding?
2. Give examples of clipping.
3. What is blending?
4. Give examples of words that have changed meaning over a period of time.

NOTES

## 2.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Compounding is a process where two or more than two free morphemes or words are joined together to form a new word.
2. Examples of clipping are bro (brother), pro (professional), prof (professor), math (mathematics), fridge (refrigerator).
3. Parts of two words are put together to form a new word. This is known as blending,
4. Two words in English that have changed its meaning are as follows:
   - **Eerie**: Before the word *eerie* described things that inspire fear, it used to describe people feeling fear — as in one could feel faint and eerie.
   - **Spinster**: As it sounds, spinsters used to be women who spun. It referred to a legal occupation before it came to mean 'unmarried woman' — and often not in the most positive ways, as opposed to a bachelor.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

- Apart from borrowing loanwords from other tongues, the English language has enriched its resources by making of new words. The new words are formed in three ways:
  a) Composition
  b) Derivation and
  c) Root creation
- When two existing words are joined together, it gives rise to a new word. The second type of words is formed by creating a new word from the old word by means of the addition of prefix and suffix. The third method is the invention of an entirely new word usually either imitative of some inarticulate noise or suggested by some instinctive feeling of expressiveness.

- The affixes, that is, prefixes and suffixes, which make up the category of bound morphemes, can be divided into two groups –Derivational morphemes and inflectional morphemes.
- After Derivation and Inflection, one of the most significant processes of word formation is Compounding. It is a process where two or more than two free morphemes or words are joined together to form a new word.
- In zero derivation, no affixes are added and a word of one category is simply used as a word of another category.
- Clipping refers to the shortening of a polysyllabic word to create a new word where the clipped word is used more. Examples: bro (brother), pro (professional), prof (professor), math (mathematics), fridge (refrigerator).
- Acronym formation refers to the formation of words from the initials of a group of words that designate one concept, usually capitalized.
- Parts of two words are put together to form a new word. This is known as blending.
- A suffix identifiable from other words is cut off from a base which has previously not been a word; that base then is used as a root, and becomes a word through widespread use. This is known as back formation.
- Reduplication is a process wherein a part of the whole of a word is repeated to indicate meaning like plurality, repetition, customary activity, added emphasis, etc.
- Language is always in a constant process of evolution as new words and grammatical rules keep on changing over a period of time with the usage as human beings keep on making smaller changes in language use for their convenience. Meaning of different words have also changed over the years.

## 2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Composition:** When two existing words are joined together, it gives rise to a new word. It is called composition.
- **Clipping**: It refers to the shortening of a polysyllabic word to create a new word where the clipped word is used more.
- **Reduplication**: It is a process wherein a part of the whole of a word is repeated to indicate meaning like plurality, repetition, customary activity, added emphasis, etc.

## 2.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

NOTES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Write a short note on English inflectional morphology.
2. What are the examples of derivational affixes in English?
3. What is zero derivation?
4. What do you mean by back formation?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Examine the different word formation processes in English language.
2. Discuss with examples the manner in which the meaning of certain words have changed over the years.

## 2.9 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

Jindal, D.V. and Pushpinder Syal. 2007. *An Introduction to Linguistics: Language, Grammar and Semantics.* New Delhi: PHI Learning.

Baugh, A.C. and Thomas Cable. 1993. *A History of the English Language.* New Delhi: Taylor and Francis.

# UNIT 3 VERNER'S LAW

NOTES

**Structure**



## 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss in detail the laws of phonetics, namely the law of palatisation, Fortunatov's law, Grimm's law and Verner's law. These laws bring to our attention changes in the pattern of sound in the language. Language is constantly in the process of evolution. These changes take place slowly and gradually over a period of time. The laws of phonetics highlight the findings with respect to sounds or group of sounds.

## 3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the different phonetic laws
- Examine closely Grimm's law and Verner's law

## 3.2 PHONETIC LAWS: VERNER'S LAW

When we study language historically, it shows that language is always in a process of evolution as certain changes keep on happening to language over a period of time; though the process of change is so slow that sometimes it becomes difficult to see those changes in an instant. Therefore, the historical linguistics focuses on these changes in language that happen over a period of time depending on the language usages – both spoken and written.

According to Tucker, 'A phonetic law of a language is a statement of a regular practice of that language at a particular time in regard to the treatment of a particular sound or group of sounds in a particular setting'. This definition clearly shows that phonetic laws operate only in a particular language at a particular time in a particular setting with regard to a single sound or a group of sounds.

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**The Law of Palatalisation**

The Law of Palatalisation was discovered by several scholars at the same time and hence it was not named after any particular individual. It was Wilhelm Thomson who first mentioned it in 1895. Sanskrit palatal sound 'c' and 'j' corresponding to western Indo-European language have the guttural sounds 'q' and 'g'. Sanskrit 'a' corresponded to the 'e' in western I.E language; there is 'c' before the Sanskrit 'a' and 'q' or 'g' before 'e' in western language. Example-Sanskrit 'ca' in Latin 'que', Latin 'coxa' Sanskrit 'kakca'. This change of gutturals into palatals in Sanskrit in certain places is explained by the law of the palatalisation which shows that this change is according to a strict rule. The law of palatalisation may be formulated as follows: 'During the Aryan period, before the change of Primitive Indo-European "e" into "a", the I.E. velars and middle gutturals were changed into palatal when followed by the palatal vowel and semi vowel – "e,i" and "i" in the Aryan language (and were preserved as gutturals in any other position)'

**Fortunatov's Law**

Fortunatov, a French Philologist, attributed the origin of cerebrals in Sanskrit to the combination of I.E dental with the liquid '*r', 'l'*. The rule was formulated by Fortunatov, and therefore is known as Fortunatov's law. The parent I.E. liquid (*'l*)*'+dentals* (*t,th,d,dh*) =cerebrals ( *t th, d ,dh,*) in combination with 'l' liquid become cerebrals*(t,th,d,dh*) in Sanskrit; *'l'* disappeared and the dental is changed into cerebrals but in the group *'r'+dental*=dental remained and unchanged (*l+t=t*). Fortunatov took into account the comparison between the Sanskrit word '*pata'* (cloth) old slavonic –'*palatino*' and Russion- '*polotno'* (lines cloth). This comparison would bring back P.I.E. form '*palta'. Palta* = liquid + dental = cerebral *pata* in Sanskrit.

**Grimm's Law**

Sanskrit, Greek Latin and Slavonic language have generally preserved the original I E Consonants except in the case of local change while the Germanic languages record a wholesale change. This was discovered and explained by Rasmusk Rask, but it was Grimm who brought all such changes called 'Sound shifting' under a single formula and systematized the whole process citing numerous examples. His formula has since become famous under the name Grimm's Law.

The law refers to the changes in the Germanic language at two distinct periods. The first stage occurred in the Prehistoric period while the second occurred around the seventh century A.D. These two stages are called the first and second sound shifting. Indo European tenues, media, aspirate ( *k t p, g d b,ghthbh*) were changed into *aspirate, tenues, and media* ( *h t f, k t p, g d b*) in Low German, and they were changed into *media aspirate and tenues ( g d b ,kh th ph, or ch z f and k t p )* in High German.

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**Verner's Law**

Verner discovered that the operation of Grimm's Law depended on the position of accent. He showed that Grimm's Law is true with regard to the *t* that followed the principal accent as in I E. *Brother* changed into *brothe*r, but it is not true in the case of the t which preceded the accent as in ***mâter*** Germanic ***moder.*** So he formulated a law after examining many instances of the above type. In the middle or end of the I E words, if the immediately preceding vowel did not bear the principal accent, * *k t p* did not become *h th f* (according to Grimm's law) and changed into g d b (double shift) in Teutonic language; * s is changed into r expect in case of the combination *ht, hs, fs, st, and sp*.

**Grassmann's law of De – aspiration**

In 1862, Hermann Grassmann demonstrated that the above correspondence is in conformity with Grimm's Law and is perfectly regular. He gave the clue by comparing the Greek and Sanskrit Forms together. He formulated a law, which is called after his name. This law explains some instances which seemed to be exceptions to Grimm's Law. It was presumed that the I E *aspirate, media, and tenues* remained unchanged in classical languages like Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin.

### 3.2.1 Spelling Reform

English language has been in a constant process of change. The meaning of the words as well as the spellings have changed considerably. The change in English Spelling was partly the result of outside influences. It was also done to make the learning process easier. The changes in the spellings of the English Language will be discussed in detail in the next unit.

**Check Your Progress**

1. Define phonetic law.
2. What are the changes Grimm's Law refers to?
3. In which year did Hermann Grassmann point out the exception to Grimm's Law?
4. What, according to Hermann Grassmann, were the exceptions to Grimm's Law?

## 3.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. A phonetic law of a language is a statement of a regular practice of that language at a particular time in regard to the treatment of a particular sound or group of sounds in a particular setting.

2. Grimm's Law refers to the changes in the Germanic language at two distinct periods. The first stage occurred in the Prehistoric period while the second occurred around the seventh century A.D. These two stages are called the first and second sound shifting.
3. In 1862, Hermann Grassmann demonstrated that there were exceptions to Grimm's Law.
4. Hermann Grassmann demonstrated that there were exceptions to Grimm's Law. It was presumed that the I E *aspirate, media, and tenues* remained unchanged in classical languages like Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin.

## 3.4 SUMMARY

- According to Tucker, 'A phonetic law of a language is a statement of a regular practice of that language at a particular time in regard to the treatment of a particular sound or group of sounds in a particular setting'. This definition clearly shows that phonetic laws operate only in a particular language at a particular time in a particular setting with regard to a single sound or a group of sounds.
- The Law of Palatalisation was discovered by several scholars at the same time and hence it was not named after any particular individual. Sanskrit palatal sound 'c' and 'j' corresponding to western Indo-European language have the guttural sounds 'q' and 'g'. This change of gutturals into palatals in Sanskrit in certain places is explained by the law of the palatalisation which shows that this change is according to a strict rule.
- Fortunatov, a French Philologist, attributed the origin of cerebrals in Sanskrit to the combination of I.E dental with the liquid '*r', 'l'*.
- Sanskrit, Greek Latin and Slavonic language have generally preserved the original I E Consonants except in the case of local change while the Germanic languages record a wholesale change. This was discovered and explained by Rasmusk Rask, but it was Grimm who brought all such changes called 'Sound shifting' under a single formula and systematized the whole process citing numerous examples.
- Verner discovered that the operation of Grimm's Law depended on the position of accent. He showed that Grimm's law is true with regard to the *t* that followed the principal accent as in I E.
- In 1862, Hermann Grassmann demonstrated that there were some instances which seemed to be exceptions to Grimm's Law. It was presumed that the I E *aspirate, media, and tenues* remained unchanged in classical languages like Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin.

## 3.5 KEY WORDS

NOTES

- **Velars:** They are consonants which are articulated with the back part of the tongue (the dorsum) against the soft palate, the back part of the roof of the mouth.
- **Gutturals:** It refers to speech sounds where the primary place of articulation is near the back of the oral cavity.
- **Aspirate:** It refers to sounds that are pronounced with an accompanying forceful expulsion of air.

## 3.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. What is the Law of Palatalisation?
2. Write a short note on Fortunatov's Law.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss in detail Grimm's Law and Verner's Law.
2. Explain the different laws of phonetics.

## 3.7 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

Jindal, D.V. and Pushpinder Syal. 2007. *An Introduction to Linguistics: Language, Grammar and Semantics.* New Delhi: PHI Learning.

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# UNIT 4 SPELLING REFORMS

NOTES

**Structure**



## 4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the earlier units, we have seen how language is in a constant process of change and how new words are formulated and added to the vocabulary of a language leading to its enrichment. We have also seen how meaning of a word is not a constant. With these changes, another significant change that we can notice in English language is the change in spelling of words which has also been a continuous process as Spellings in English language are reformed to make it easier and more phonetically sound. This unit will discuss the changes in spelling of English Language.

## 4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the reforms in English spelling
- Explain the French influence on English spellings
- Discuss the standardization of spellings after the 17th century

## 4.2 SPELLING REFORMS

According to Ferdinand de Saussure, the famous linguist and father of Structuralism, language can be studied either 'diachronically' or 'synchronically'. The study of the development of spelling of English language over the ages is a diachronic study of English Language which makes us understand not only the evolution of English, but also how the society changed itself psychologically and socially. The English spelling emerged from the pictograms and ideograms of ancient Egypt by the process of the phonetisation or association of sounds with symbols. Around 1500 B. C., the ideograms were modified to form the north Semitic syllabary. This particular syllabary developed into the consonantal alphabets of the Phoenicians. The Greeks learnt the new alphabet from the Phoenicians and in turn passed it on to the Romans

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which was in due course transmitted to Britain. The Runic alphabet of twenty-four letters was a special adaptation of Greek and Latin, and was used by the Anglo-Saxons before their conversion to Christianity after which however they adopted the Latin alphabet in its British form.

In the Anglo-Saxon England, Germanic runes were used in inscriptions and Latin in manuscripts. After the Norman Conquest, French fashions inherited directly from Latin gradually prevailed over these runes. The French influence created further confusion in English spellings. Nevertheless, there was a greater correlation between sound and letter in Old English than there is in Modern English today. For example, there were no silent consonants in Old English, and hence all four consonants were pronounced in 'chint' (boy) instead of two in Modern English 'knight'. The change in spelling convention was one of the most noticeable features of the transition from Old to Middle English and was mainly due to the influence of French. In the spelling of consonants, Middle English showed great advancement as various sounds represented in Old English by a single letter were more accurately distinguished. There have been few striking innovations in spelling since Middle English. While mostly the tendency has been towards a restriction of choice, uniformity and standardization, some alternative spellings of words have been accepted: Flour – flower, metal – mettle.

The sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries had a stabilizing influence on English spelling – the omission of the final 'e' in many words, the use of 'j' and 'v' as consonants and 'i' and 'u' as vowels, etc. The early seventeenth century also saw the establishment of 'I' initially and medially and 'y' finally. Thus, we have 'beautiful' beside 'beauty' and 'cried' beside 'cry'. But till the seventeenth century, the standardization of spelling didn't happen much. It is only in the following centuries that scholars like Dr. Samuel Johnson, Noah Webster, George Bernard Shaw, Dean Howells, Andrew Carnegie and Theodore Roosevelt attempted to reform English spellings. Alongside them, The American Philological Association and the English Philological Society set up their respective Spelling Reforms associations. In 1930, a Swedish Philologist R. E. Zachrisson proposed a respelled English called 'Aliglie' which received support and was widely endorsed. In the present context, the contact between spelling and pronunciation has become so disparate that it is the unphonetic spelling which has become the standard and canonized one.

**Check Your Progress**

1. Why is the study of English spelling considered a diachronic study of language?
2. Where did English spelling originate from?
3. What was the main reason for the change in spelling from Old English to Middle English?
4. Name some of the scholars who attempted to reform English spellings.

## 4.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

NOTES

1. The study of English spelling is considered a diachronic study of language as it helps us understand not only the evolution of English, but also how the society changed itself psychologically and socially.
2. English spelling emerged from the pictograms and ideograms of ancient Egypt by the process of the phonetisation or association of sounds with symbols.
3. The change in spelling convention was one of the most noticeable features of the transition from Old to Middle English and was mainly due to the influence of French.
4. Scholars like Dr. Samuel Johnson, Noah Webster, George Bernard Shaw, Dean Howells, Andrew Carnegie and Theodore Roosevelt attempted to reform English spellings.

## 4.4 SUMMARY

- The study of the development of spelling of English language over the ages is a diachronic study of English Language which makes us understand not only the evolution of English, but also how the society changed itself psychologically and socially.
- The English spelling emerged from the pictograms and ideograms of ancient Egypt by the process of the phonetisation or association of sounds with symbols.
- After the Norman Conquest, French fashions inherited directly from Latin gradually prevailed over these runes. The French influence created further confusion in English spellings.
- The change in spelling convention was one of the most noticeable features of the transition from Old to Middle English and was mainly due to the influence of French.
- The sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries had a stabilizing influence on English spelling – the omission of the final 'e' in many words, the use of 'j' and 'v' as consonants and 'I' and 'u' as vowels, etc. But till the seventeenth century, the standardization of spelling didn't happen much. It is only in the following centuries that scholars like Dr. Samuel Johnson, Noah Webster, George Bernard Shaw, Dean Howells, Andrew Carnegie and Theodore Roosevelt attempted to reform English spellings.

## 4.5 KEY WORDS

NOTES

- **Pictograms:** It is a symbol that conveys meaning through its resemblance to a physical object.
- **Ideograms:** It is a graphical symbol that represents an idea, rather than a group of letters arranged according to the phonemes of a spoken language, as is done in alphabetic languages.
- **Philologist:** One who studies the history of languages, especially by looking closely at literature is known as a philologist.

## 4.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Write a short note on the origin of English spelling.
2. What was the impact of the Norman Conquest on English spellings?
3. Write a short note on the standardization of English spelling.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the study of English spelling as a diachronic study of English language.
2. Examine the reforms in English spelling.

## 4.7 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

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# BLOCK - II
# VARIETY OF ENGLISH

NOTES

# UNIT 5 FOREIGN ELEMENTS IN ENGLISH

**Structure**



## 5.0 INTRODUCTION

The English language has developed over many centuries. Many interesting facts are revealed in the historical study of the English language. The English language is a West Germanic language of the Indo-European language family. It is the outcome of the dialects spoken by the Germanic tribes who invaded England in the late fifth century. These Germanic tribes were the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles. Venerable Bede's monumental work on English is studied to acknowledge the growth of the language. In his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People,* he recorded that these tribes crossed the North Sea which is the present-day Denmark and Northern Germany.

Otto Jespersen stated that the country is called England (OE Englaland), the nation English (OE Englissse, Englisemon, cf also Angelcynn, Angelpeod), and the language English (OE Englisc Englise gereord). A.C. Baugh states:

> 'The word is derived from the name of the Angles (OE Engle) but is used without distinction for the language of all the invading tribes. In like manner the land and its people are early called Angelcynn (Angle-kin or race of the Angles), and this is the common name until after the Danish period. From about the year 1000 England (land of the Angles) begins to take its place. The name English is thus older than the name England.'

Vocabulary has changed constantly in English language, as A. C. Baugh writes:

> 'The change that is constantly going on in a living language can be most easily seen in the vocabulary. Old words die out, new words are

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> added, and existing words change their meaning. Much of the vocabulary of Old English has been lost, and the development of new words to meet new conditions is one of the most familiar phenomena of our language.'

The English language has shown a marked tendency to go outside its own linguistic resources and borrow from other languages. Reference may be made to Dryden's observation. He has said that 'I trade both with the living and the dead for the enrichment of our native language'. In the course of time, English has built up an unusual capacity for assimilating outside elements. David Crystal rightly commented:

> 'Vocabulary is the Everest of a language. There is no larger task than to look for order among the hundreds of thousands of words which comprise the lexicon. There may be many greater tasks – working out a coherent grammatical system is certainly one – but nothing beats lexical study for sheer quantity and range.'

## 5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Examine the Celtic, Latin and Greek borrowings in English
- Discuss the Scandinavian and French influence on English language
- Explain the other foreign elements in English language

## 5.2 FOREIGN ELEMENTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The history of English language is a history of borrowings from other languages which makes many foreign elements come into the vocabulary of English language. David Crystal points out that English has borrowed words from over 350 languages around the world. The lexical borrowings were the direct outcome of the important socio-historical events and circumstances in the history of England. Regarding the borrowings, Otto Jespersen writes:

> 'They might with just as much right be termed some of the milestones of general history because they show us the course of civilization and the wanderings of inventions and institutions, and in many cases valuable information as to the inner life of nations when dry annals tell us nothing but the dates of the deaths of kings and bishop.'

When we talk of the English language, we see that English has developed much from the Old English that we know from the work Beowulf to the modern day English. This development happened because of the internal changes in the language as well as the different borrowings from other languages. Some of the

borrowings which significantly influenced English language and gave it a modern shape that it is in the present day are discussed below:

- English is a West Germanic language which belongs to the Indo-European language family, originating from the Anglo-Frisian dialects spoken by people formerly living in the area of northwest Germany and the Northern Netherlands.
- English language has been influenced by a number of other languages.
- The size of the Old English vocabulary is about thirty thousand words.
- English was then influenced by many languages, primarily by Scandinavian languages, Latin, and French.
- 29 percent of the words in English come from French. 29% come from Latin.
- 26% of English words come from German.
- 6% of words in English come from Greek.
- 6% of English words come from other languages.
- 4% words are derived from Proper Names.

There are three languages which contributed extensively to the stock of English vocabulary –

(a) Latin,

(b) Scandinavian and

(c) French.

Otto Jespersen observes –

> 'Three very important factors in the development of the language, three superstructures, as it were, that came to be erected on the Anglo-Saxon foundation, each of them modifying the character of the language, and each preparing the ground for its successor. A Scandinavian element, a French element, and a Latin element now enter largely into the texture of the English language, and as each element is characteristically different from the others.'

## Celtic Words

Celtic words did not form the permanent part of English vocabulary. Certain names of the places of England suggest the existence of Celts in those areas. The name London itself, likely goes back to a Celtic designation. Other such words of Celtic origin are Devonshire, Winchester, Salisbury, Exeter, Gloucester, Worcester and Lichfield. The Thames is a Celtic river name. The other river names are Avon, Exe, Esk, Usk, Dover, and Wye. Other Celtic words in English include Duncombe, Holcombe, Winchcombe; torr (high rock, peak) in Torr, Torcross, bin, cradle, dun, crag, curse, loch, cross and hermit.

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### Latin Words

English language has borrowed many words from Latin. Concerning the influence of Latin, A. C. Baugh says:

> 'Latin was not the language of a conquered people. It was the language of a highly regarded civilization, one from which the Anglo-Saxons wanted to learn. Contact with that civilization, at first commercial and military later religious and intellectual, extended over many centuries and was constantly renewed.'

- Latin words of places in England include Chester, Colchester, Dorchester, Manchester, Winchester, Lancaster, Donscaster, Gloucestor, Worcester, etc.
- Christian Words borrowed from Latin - abbot, alms, altar, angel, anthem, Arian, ark, candle, canon, chalice, cleric, cowl, deacon, disciple, epistle, hymn, litany, manna, martyr, mass, minister, noon, nun, offer, organ, pall, palm, pope, priest, provost, psalm, psalter, relic, rule, shrift, shrine, shrive, stole, subdeacon, synod, temple, tunic, Pope, Bishop, and Priest, or Monk.
- Names of articles of clothing and household things borrowed from Latin - cap, sock, silk, purple, chest, mat, sack, etc.
- Words of education and learning from Latin – school, master, Latin (possibly an earlier borrowing), grammatic(al), verse, meter, gloss, notary, etc.
- In Sixteenth century: exit, genius, areas, fungus, miser, circus, vacuum, medium, species, ignoramus, vagary.
- In Seventeenth century: torpor, specimen, arena, apparatus, focus, album, complex, minimum, status, lens, pendulum.
- In Eighteenth century: nucleus, inertia, alibi, ultimatum, extra, insomania, bonus (noun), via (preposition), deficit.
- In Nineteenth century: opus, ego, moratorium, referendum, bacillus

### Greek words

Many Greek words also found its way into the English language, such as acme, anonymous, catastrophe, criterion, ephemeral, heterodox, idiosyncrasy, lexicon misanthrope, ostracize, polemic tantalize, thermometer and tonic.

Greek scientific and philosophic terms in English – atom, character, chorus, cycle, and acrobat. A few examples of essential Greek elements are graph (writing), phone (sound). Other examples are anaesthesia, lithography, epidiascope, ophthalmoscope, stereotype, telephone, cinematograph, photography telephone, phonograph (sound-writing).

### Scandinavian Words

The Scandinavian words entered into the English language after the settlements of the Danes. Some such words are

> 'Axle-tree, band, bank, birth, boon, booth, brink, bull, calf (of leg), crook, dirt, down (feathers), dregs, egg, fellow, freckle, gait, gap, girth, guess, hap, keel, kid, leg, link, loan, mire, race, reef (of sail), reindeer, rift, root, scab, scales, score, scrap, seat, sister, skill, skin, skirt, sky, slaughter, snare, stack, steak, swain, thrift, tidings, trust, want, window.'

### French Origin

The following are the English Words of French Origin.

- *Government and Administrative:* govern, government, administer, crown, state, empire, royal, majesty, treaty, statute, parliament, tax, rebel, traitor, treason, exile, chancellor, treasurer, major, noble, peer, prince, princess, duke, squire, page, peasant, slave, servant, vassal, etc.
- *Ecclesiastical:* religion, theology, sermon, confession, clergy, cardinal, friar, crucifix, censer, lectern, abbey, convent, creator, savior, virgin, faith, heresy, schism, solemn, divine, devout, preach, pray, adore, confess, etc.
- *Law:* justice, equity, plaintiff, judge, attorney, petition, inquest, felon, evidence, sue, accuse, arrest, blame, libel, slander, felony, adultery, property, estate, heir, executor, etc.
- *Military, Army and Navy:* armor, army, navy, peace, enemy, arms, battle, spy, combat, siege, ambush, soldier, guard, mail, buckler, banner, lance, besiege, defend, array, etc.
- *Clothing:* habit, gown, robe, garment, attire, cape, coat, collar, petticoat, train, lace, embroidery, pleat, buckle, button, tassel, plume, satin, taffeta, fur, sable, blue, vermilion, russet, tawny, jewel, ornament, broach, ivory, turquoise, topaz, garnet, ruby, pearl, diamond, etc.
- *Food:* feast, repast, collation, mess, appetite, tart, sole, perch, sturgeon, sardine, venison, beef, veal, mutton, port, bacon, toast, cream, sugar, salad, raisin, jelly, spice, clove, etc.
- *Social:* baron, noble, dame, servant, messenger, feast, minstrel, juggler, largess, curtain, couch, lamp, wardrobe, screen, closet, leisure, dance, carol, lute, melody, etc.
- *Hunting:* rein, curry, trot, stable, harness, mastiff, spaniel, stallion, pheasant, quail, heron, joust, tournament, pavilion, etc.
- *Art, Learning, Medicine:* painting, sculpture, music, beauty, color, image, cathedral, palace, mansion, chamber, ceiling, porch, column, poet, prose, romance, paper, pen, story, rime, lay, volume, chapter, study, logic, geometry, grammar, noun, gender, physician, malady, pain, gout, plague, pulse, remedy, poison, etc.

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**Common words and expressions**

*Nouns:* age, air, city, cheer, honour, joy, etc.

*Adjectives:* chaste, coy, cruel poor, nice, pure, etc.

*Verbs:* advance, advise, carry, cry, desire, etc.

*Phrases:* draw near, make believe, hand to hand, by heart, without fail, etc.

**Italian Influence:** replica, studio, terra cotta opera, piano, pizzicato, prima donna, rallentando, staccato, basso, fantasia, gamut, violin, solo, giraffe, sonnet pizzicato, etc.

**Words from Netherlands:** cicerone, fiasco, influenza, isolae, motto, stanza, umbrella, etc.

*Nautical terms of Dutch Origin:* smuggle, cruise, easel, etch aloof, vast, boom, buoy, cruiser, deck, dock, flyboat, hull, skipper, sloop, smack

**Portuguese Origin words:** albatross, caste, cocoa, dodo, pagada, veranda, monsoon, marmalade, molasses, and flamingo.

**Arabic Words:** Nadir, artichoke, arsenal, zenith, hijab, doner, kebab, imam, bayildi, Hamas, Taliban, Bedouin, gazelle, giraffe, harem, hashish, lute, minaret, mosque, myrrh, salaam, sirocco, sultan, vizier, bazaar, etc.

**Russia Origin Words:** samovar, soviet, sputnik, steppe, troika, vodka, etc.

**Words from Chinese Languages:** Tea

**Words of Indian origin**

- avatar, chakra, karma, mantra, yoga, guru, swastika, mahatma (of Sanskrit origin).
- catamaran, copra, curry, mango, teak (Dravidian languages)
- bangle, bungalow, cot, pundit, shampoo, jungle, lot, thug, tom-tom, Calico, chintz, tussore, brinjal, jaggery, mango, banyan, teak, anaconda.

Thus, English language developed into its modern form by borrowing words from different languages as it came in contact with many cultures and borrowed from all these cultures to formulate its rich vocabulary. These words are also called Loan Words.

**Check Your Progress**

1. Give examples of English words that have a Celtic origin.
2. What are some of the Christian words in English that have been borrowed from Latin?
3. When did the Scandinavian influence on English occur?
4. Give examples of English words relating to hunting that have been borrowed from French.
5. What are some of the English words borrowed from Sanskrit?

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## 5.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. English words of Celtic origin are Devonshire, Winchester, Salisbury, Exeter, Gloucester, Worcester and Lichfield.
2. Christian words borrowed from Latin are abbot, alms, altar, angel, anthem, Arian, ark, candle, canon, chalice, cleric, cowl, deacon, disciple and epistle.
3. The Scandinavian words entered into the English language after the settlements of the Danes.
4. English words relating to hunting that have been borrowed from French are rein, curry, trot, stable, harness, mastiff, spaniel, stallion, pheasant, quail, heron, joust, tournament, pavilion, etc.
5. Words like avatar, chakra, karma, mantra, yoga, guru, swastika and mahatma are of Sanskrit origin.

## 5.4 SUMMARY

- The English language has shown a marked tendency to go outside its own linguistic resources and borrow from other languages. The lexical borrowings were the direct outcome of the important socio-historical events and circumstances in the history of England.
- English was influenced by many languages, primarily by Scandinavian languages, Latin, and French.
- Celtic words did not form the permanent part of English vocabulary. Certain names of the places of England suggest the existence of Celts in those areas. The name London itself, likely goes back to a Celtic designation. Other such words of Celtic origin are Devonshire, Winchester, Salisbury, Exeter, Gloucester, Worcester and Lichfield.

- English language has borrowed many words from Latin. Latin words of places in England include Chester, Colchester, Dorchester, Manchester, Winchester, Lancaster, Donscaster, Gloucestor, Worcester, etc. Names of articles of clothing and household things borrowed from Latin are cap, sock, silk, purple, chest, mat, sack,etc.
- Many Greek words also found its way into the English language, such as acme, anonymous, catastrophe, criterion, ephemeral, heterodox, idiosyncrasy, lexicon misanthrope, ostracize, polemic tantalize, thermometer and tonic.
- The Scandinavian words entered into the English language after the settlements of the Danes. Some such words are 'Axle-tree, band, bank, birth, boon, booth, brink, bull, calf (of leg), crook, dirt, down (feathers), dregs, egg, fellow, freckle, gait, gap, girth, guess, hap, keel, kid, leg, link, loan, mire, race, reef (of sail), reindeer, rift, root, scab, scales, score, scrap, seat, sister, skill, skin, skirt, sky, slaughter, snare, stack, steak, swain, thrift, tidings, trust, want, window.'
- The French influence on the English language was evident. French borrowings were seen in words relating to law, clothing, military, administration, etc.
- Words of Indian origin are as follows:
  - o avatar, chakra, karma, mantra, yoga, guru, swastika, mahatma (of Sanskrit origin).
  - o catamaran, copra, curry, mango, teak (Dravidian languages)
  - o bangle, bungalow, cot, pundit, shampoo, jungle, lot, thug, tom-tom, Calico, chintz, tussore, brinjal, jaggery, mango, banyan, teak, anaconda.

## 5.5 KEY WORDS

- **Lexical borrowing:** It is the adoption of individual words or even large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect.
- **Loan words:** English language developed into its modern form by borrowing words from different languages as it came in contact with many cultures and borrowed from all these cultures to formulate its rich vocabulary. These words are also called loan words.

## 5.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the three languages that have contributed extensively to the English vocabulary?

2. Write a short note on Latin borrowings in English.
3. What are some of the Greek words that have found its way to the English language?

**Long-Answer Questions**



1. Discuss the French influence on English language.
2. Examine the foreign elements in English language.

## 5.7 FURTHER READINGS


Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

Jindal, D.V. and Pushpinder Syal. 2007. *An Introduction to Linguistics: Language, Grammar and Semantics.* New Delhi: PHI Learning.

Baugh, A.C. and Thomas Cable. 1993. *A History of the English Language.* New Delhi: Taylor and Francis.

# UNIT 6 MAKERS OF ENGLISH

NOTES

**Structure**



## 6.0 INTRODUCTION

English language, which was the language of the lower classes of England during the Medieval Age, developed to become a language which is presently spoken by half of the world population. The growth of English language to such a dominating position in the linguistic map of the world is partly due to the rise of England as a major colonial power. But with this kind of development of English, the language diversified so much that there is nothing called 'the English' anymore as 'Queen's English' is no longer a sacrosanct language of the British Islands, but a language which has been modified, changed and moulded according to the needs of the people where it is spoken presently. There are many Englishes which came into existence that have a distinct identity of their own – such as, American English, Indian English, Caribbean English, African English, Australian English, etc.

## 6.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the growth of English as a world language
- Discuss the contribution of various writers as makers of English

## 6.2 THE RISE OF ENGLISH

With the end of World War II, the supremacy of Britishers in the world politics began to see a downfall and the United States of America became the new West. Though the British Isles lost the erstwhile dominant position it had, it left behind its language at various places it was ruling. The Britishers were forced to leave the colonized countries, but their language did not become extinct in those colonized spaces; instead, it made certain adjustments to become a language of those nations.

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For example, the British left India in 1947, but the English Language was left behind which was adjusted, moderated, modified, assimilated into the Indian context to give birth to an English which is typical of India, and different from Queen's English. English may not be a mother tongue of Indians, but it is as much an Indian language today as any other language of India. It is India's National official language and is considered a prestigious language as all bureaucratic work, all higher academic works, etc. are done using English language. Thus in all colonized countries English language took a different shape and today we have many Englishes existing side by side along with the British English.

**Do you know?**

English was the language of the lower classes in the Medieval England, the elites or the rulers used to speak French and the clergies, Latin. From the language of the lower classes on England, English rose to be a language where it is thought that half of the world will be proficient in English language by 2050.

There are nearly 6900 living languages in the world, and amongst all those, English is the most popular. The Modern English, sometimes described as the first global *lingua franca*, is the dominant international language in science, business, aviation, communications, mass media and diplomacy. English is spoken as a first language by more than 330 million people throughout the world. It is estimated that English is currently the language most often taught as a second language around the world. The geographical spread of English is unique among the languages of the world, throughout history. Countries using English as either a first or a second language are located on all five continents, and the total population of these countries amounts to about 49% of the world's population. A working knowledge of English has become a requirement in a number of fields, occupations and professions such as medicine and computing; as a consequence, about one in five of the world's population speaks English with a good level of competence. It is, by international treaty, the official language for aerial and maritime communications. English is an official language of the United Nations and many other international organizations. It is believed that English is the most widely published language; the availability of books, magazines, and newspapers written in English in many countries around the world is a good poof.

As mentioned before, the reach of English language and its dominance in many milieus, has made it a global or world language with both positive and negative sides. The power of global English has raised worldwide concerns:

(i) English is often considered as a 'killer language' – a language of linguistic imperialism – to be more general, a language of cultural imperialism. The colonial powers must have left the erstwhile colonies, and they must have gained political independence; but the West still rules the world not only in economic terms, but in terms of culture and in terms of the craving to learn English language and culture (American

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culture in the present day context). Many a times, this blind imitation has led to a blow (often death blow) to many indigenous languages and dialects and sometimes even cultures (the Aboriginals in Australia) as many languages become extinct. Some scholars are also of the view that this spread of English language as a language of linguistic imperialism is almost unstoppable.

Never before in the history of mankind has a language been spoken by so many and in such a diverse geographical expanse leading to its dominating position in the linguistic world map of the world. With such diverse expanse it has led to an unprecedented power of the language as it is used in almost all significant international bodies, in maritime and air traffic control, in international diplomacy, in computer language, etc.

(ii) David Crystal is of the opinion that the superior status of English in the present-day context is primarily for two reasons – geographical-historical and socio-cultural. But whatever the reasons, such development of English language has a significant manifestation of it. Political scientists have started taking into account cultural factors affecting global politics. Moreover, it can be said that the rise of English has become synonymous with globalization. It is not that the rise of English is a product of globalization, but to put it in a more correct form, one should say with Joshua A. Fishman that 'English [is] the language of globalization'.

(iii) David Crystal also talks about a broader outlook on the status of global English today since 'a more deep-rooted process of globalization seems to be at work today, transcending individual language situations.' According to him attention should be given to the more effective factors including 'the recognition of global interdependence, the desire to have a voice in world affairs, and the value of multilingualism in attracting trade markets which all support the adoption of a functionalist account of English, where the language is seen as a valuable instrument enabling people to achieve particular goals.' Crystal also insists on 'a model which sees English playing a central role in empowering the subjugated and marginalized, and eroding the division between the "haves" and the "have nots".'

(iv) Alastair Pennycook uses the term *Global Englishes* to situate the use and spread of English: 'English is closely tied to processes of globalization: a language of threat, desire, destruction and opportunity. It cannot be usefully understood in modernist state-centric models of imperialism or world Englishes, or in terms of traditional, segregationist models of language. […] I prefer to locate these Englishes within a more complex vision of globalization. This view seeks to understand

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the role of English both critically – in terms of new forms of power, control and destruction – and in its complexity – in terms of new forms of resistance, change, appropriation and identity. It suggests that we need to move beyond arguments about homogeneity or heterogeneity, or imperialism and nation states, and instead focus on translocal and transcultural flows. English is a translocal language, a language of fluidity and fixity that moves across, while becoming embedded in, the materiality of localities and social relations. English is bound up with transcultural flows, a language of imagined communities and refashioning identities.'

(v) Paul Jay in his article 'Beyond Discipline? Globalization and the Future of English' argues that globalization also involves processes of exchange, dissemination, and transformation that are cultural and symbolic – 'the key question […] is how to shift the center of English away from its traditional British and American focus without colonizing the variety of literatures and cultures now contributing to the transnational explosion of English.' He and many other scholars are of the opinion that on the one hand, the discipline has moved away from a narrow focus on literature per se and on the other hand, there is a realization of the inadequacy of studying literature and culture within the restrictive and distorting borders of nation-states. This kind of a study of rise of English offers a context for dealing with the proliferation of English literatures written in diasporic conditions, literatures that would otherwise be assimilated to a narrow, nationalist paradigm.

'Between the end of the reign of Elisabeth I (1588) and the beginning of the reign of Elisabeth II (1952)' (Crystal 1997, 25), the number of English speakers increased from five to seven million, most of whom lived in the British Isles, to approximately 250 million, the vast majority residing outside the British Isles (Crystal 1997, Graddol 1997, Pennycook 1994).

**Check Your Progress**

1. Why is English considered a 'killer language'?
2. What are the two broad reasons for the superior status of English?

## 6.3 THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EMINENT WRITERS IN MAKING ENGLISH

As stated earlier, English was the language of the lower classes in the Medieval Age and Latin was the language of the Court as well as that of the elite class. From that position, English gained the prominence in England, before spreading across

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the world. This happened as English poets, dramatists and writers went on to create a literature so rich that it gained the attention of the people and also at the same time replaced Latin with its richness and variety in the Elite circles in England. One needs to understand here that this journey of English as a language within England was something that is very interesting as it shows that a nation having faith in its own language and culture can prosper and become one of the dominant powers of the world. It is not to say colonialism or that imperialistic tendencies are justified; but that for the sake of national development, there is a necessity of developing language which can then have its say in the consciousness of the people in such a manner that it becomes a matter of pride to be born as a native speaker of that language.

The first poet to bring that faith in English was Chaucer in the Medieval Age. When the Medieval Elite men were speaking Latin and were disrespectful of English language and culture, Chaucer decided that he will write his poetry in English. It is not that there were no poems in English before Chaucer. *Beowulf* is an ancient English epic written much before Chaucer was writing. But the Old English is very different from the English that we know today. Chaucer was the one who brought faith in English and made it a language of creative expression. As we progress from the Medieval Age to that of the Renaissance, we see a host of poets and dramatists exploring English language and literature and taking it to the next level. Obviously, the most significant one among them is William Shakespeare who not only took English drama to greater heights by experimenting with the Classical dramatic norms and forms, but also significantly contributed to the development of English language by his poetic use of language.

Renaissance was a time of exploration – not only outside (maritime exploration) but also that of the inner being of human beings leading to a new gamut of expressions and feelings paving path in the domain of English. Along with Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Spenser, Sidney, Francis Bacon and others also contributed significantly. These contributions took glory of English language to greater heights. Then came the greatest of the English poet – John Milton whose epic *Paradise Lost* as well as other writings made English language reach even greater heights. Each language finds its greatest poetic expression in the form of epic where the sublimity of language is being explored along with the sublime theme of the epic. Milton did that in *Paradise Lost;* and brought honour to English language by achieving a feat in English which was earlier tried by Chaucer and Spenser.

By the time, Milton had written his epic, English language was itself on sound footing and had already engrossed the European minds and was going far beyond England. The American white civilization was in the process of setting its firm foot and British companies had already started its exploration of the sea with a far greater emphasis.

In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson wrote the first dictionary and standardized English language. The age also saw the emergence of journals and

magazines which was getting popular amongst English reading public. It was also the age of the advent of the novel and in the next two centuries the genre of novel explored the English prose to a completely new level. It was also the time of colonial expansion and English language spread far and wide across the globe.

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**Check Your Progress**

3. What was the language of the court in the Medieval Age?
4. Name the writer who elevated the status of English during the Medieval Age?
5. Who is the author of *Paradise Lost*?
6. Name the prominent English author who published a dictionary in the Eighteenth century.

## 6.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. English is often considered as a 'killer language' – a language of linguistic imperialism – to be more general, a language of cultural imperialism. This is because the colonial powers left the erstwhile colonies but the West still rules the world not only in economic terms, but also in terms of culture. This blind imitation has led to a blow (often death blow) to many indigenous languages and dialects and sometimes even cultures (the Aboriginals in Australia) as many languages become extinct.
2. The superior status of English is primarily for two reasons – geographical-historical factors and socio-cultural factors.
3. Latin was the language of the Court as well as that of the elite class in the Medieval Age.
4. Chaucer elevated the status of English during the Medieval Age.
5. Milton wrote the *Paradise Lost.*
6. In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson wrote the first dictionary and standardized English language.

## 6.5 SUMMARY

- With the end of World War II, the supremacy of Britishers in the world politics began to see a downfall and the United States of America became the new West. The Britishers were forced to leave the colonized countries, but their language did not become extinct in those colonized spaces; instead, it made certain adjustments to become a language of those nations.

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- English is spoken as a first language by more than 330 million people throughout the world. It is estimated that English is currently the language most often taught as a second language around the world.
- The reach of English language and its dominance in many milieus, has made it a global or world language with both positive and negative sides.
- English is often considered as a 'killer language' – a language of linguistic imperialism – to be more general, a language of cultural imperialism.
- David Crystal is of the opinion that the superior status of English in the present-day context is primarily for two reasons – geographical-historical and socio-cultural. Moreover, it can be said that the rise of English has become synonymous with globalization.
- English was the language of the lower classes in the Medieval Age and Latin was the language of the Court as well as that of the Elite Class. From that position, English gained the prominence in England, before spreading across the world.
- The first poet to bring faith in English was Chaucer in the Medieval Age. As we progress from the Medieval Age to that of the Renaissance, we see a host of poets and dramatists exploring English language and literature and taking it to the next level. Obviously, the most significant one among them is William Shakespeare. Along with Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Spenser, Sidney, Francis Bacon and others also contributed significantly. In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson wrote the first dictionary and standardized English language.

## 6.6 KEY WORDS

- **Linguistic imperialism:** It is the imposition of one language on speakers of other languages.
- **Globalization:** It is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide due to advances in transportation and communication technology.
- **Multilingualism:** It is the ability of an individual speaker or a community of speakers to communicate effectively in three or more languages.
- **Renaissance:** It was the revival of European art and literature under the influence of classical models in the 14th–16th centuries.

## 6.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Why is English described as the first global lingua franca?
2. Write a short note on Global Englishes.
3. Why is English considered a translocal language?
4. How did the Renaissance elevate the status of English?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the impact of globalization on the status of English.
2. Examine the contribution of writers towards the elevation of the status of English.

## 6.8 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

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Jindal, D.V. and Pushpinder Syal. 2007. *An Introduction to Linguistics: Language, Grammar and Semantics.* New Delhi: PHI Learning.

Baugh, A.C. and Thomas Cable. 1993. *A History of the English Language.* New Delhi: Taylor and Francis.

# UNIT 7 AMERICAN ENGLISH AND STANDARD ENGLISH

NOTES

**Structure**



## 7.0 INTRODUCTION

There are marked differences between American English and British English, the most prominent being in terms of the spelling. The changes in spelling were introduced to accentuate the cultural independence of the United States from Britain. Apart from spellings, there were other differences regarding pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, etc. This unit will discuss in detail the differences between American English and British English.

## 7.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the impact of colonial expansion on the global status of English
- Discuss the differences between American English and British English

## 7.2 AMERICAN AND BRITISH ENGLISH

We have already come across the rise of English as a language in the earlier unit and seen how English language developed into being a global language, leading to many Englishes, rather than a single English Language. The maritime exploration of Columbus led to Europe exploring far beyond its continent to remote places of the world. In some places, they went and settled (such as in the United States), while in others they set up Penal Colonies (such as Australia). They also colonized some places such as Africa, Latin America and Asia. Thus, from sixteenth to

nineteenth century, the colonial expansion of Europe carried on and in this process, England and Spain had a major role to play as these are the two nations which explored more than others and established their rule over different parts of the world. By the time, Queen Victoria came to power in the nineteenth century, the global situation was such that half of the world was ruled by the British, leading the British men to boast triumphantly, 'The Sun never sets on the British Empire.'



As Britain's influence spread across the world, English became a global link language. Due to England's dominance in world politics initially and then the American hegemony, English has come to gain a prominent place in the languages of the world. Although American and British (Supposedly the Standard English) speak the language in more or less the same manner, there are many differences in the way they spell few words. Other differences were regarding pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, etc.

### American versus British Spelling

There are some differences between American and British English in terms of Spelling. We need to know these differences as whichever English, we follow, whether American or British in writing words, we need to be cautious that we should choose one category and use it throughout. We should not mix British and American spellings alternatively in a single document.

***Table 7.1*** *Differences in British and American Spellings*

**Words ending in –re**
British English words that end in *-re* often end in *-er* in American English:

| British | US |
|---|---|
| centre | center |
| fibre | fiber |
| litre | liter |
| theatre | theater **or** theatre |

**Words ending in -our**
British English words ending in *-our* usually end in *-or* in American English:

| British | US |
|---|---|
| colour | color |
| flavour | flavor |
| humour | humor |
| labour | labor |
| neighbour | neighbor |

**Words ending in -ize or -ise**
Verbs in British English that can be spelled with either *-ize* or *-ise* at the end are always spelled with *-ize* at the end in American English:

| British | US |
|---|---|
| apologize **or** apologise | apologize |
| organize **or** organise | organize |
| recognize **or** recognise | recognize |

**Words ending in -yse**
Verbs in British English that end in *-yse* are always spelled *-yze* in American English:

| British | US |
|---|---|
| analyse | analyze |
| breathalyse | breathalyze |
| paralyse | paralyze |

NOTES

| Words ending in a vowel plus l | Words spelled with double vowels |
|---|---|
| In British spelling, verbs ending in a vowel plus *l* double the *l* when adding endings that begin with a vowel. In American English, the *l* is not doubled:<br>**British** / **US**<br>*travel* / *travel*<br>travelled / traveled<br>travelling / traveling<br>traveller / traveler<br>*fuel* / *fuel*<br>fuelled / fueled<br>fuelling / fueling | British English words that are spelled with the double vowels *ae* or *oe* are just spelled with an *e* in American English:<br>**British** / **US**<br>leukaemia / leukemia<br>manoeuvre / maneuver<br>oestrogen / estrogen<br>paediatric / pediatric<br>Note that in American English, certain terms, such as *archaeology*, keep the *ae* spelling as standard, although the spelling with just the *e* (i.e. *archeology*) is usually acceptable as well. |
| **Nouns ending with –ence** | **Nouns ending with –ogue** |
| Some nouns that end with *-ence* in British English are spelled *-ense* in American English:<br>**British** / **US**<br>defence / defense<br>licence / license<br>offence / offense<br>pretence / pretense | Some nouns that end with *-ogue* in British English end with either *-og* or *-ogue*in American English:<br>**British** / **US**<br>analogue / analog **or** analogue<br>catalogue / catalog **or** catalogue<br>dialogue / dialog **or** dialogue |
| Source: https://www.lexico.com/grammar/british-and-spelling | |

**Check Your Progress**

1. Name the maritime explorer whose expedition led to colonial expansion of Europe.
2. Which two nations played a major role in colonial expansion?
3. Give an example of the difference in spelling in American English for words ending in –re.
4. How does American English differ from British English as far as nouns ending with –ence are concerned?

## 7.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The maritime exploration of Columbus led to Europe exploring far beyond its continent to remote places of the world.
2. England and Spain had a major role to play in the process of colonial expansion.

3. British English words that end in *-re* often end in *-er* in American English. Therefore, centre in British English becomes center in American English. Similarly, fibre in British English becomes fiber in American English.
4. Some nouns that end with *-ence* in British English are spelled *-ense* in American English. 'Defence' in British English becomes 'defense' in American English.

## 7.4 SUMMARY

- The maritime exploration of Columbus led to Europe exploring far beyond its continent to remote places of the world. In some places, they went and settled (such as in the United States), while in others they set up Penal Colonies (such as Australia). They also colonized some places such as Africa, Latin America and Asia.
- As Britain's influence spread across the world, English became a global link language. Due to England's dominance in the World Politics initially and then the American hegemony, English has come to gain a prominent place in the languages of the world.
- Although American and British (Supposedly the Standard English) speak the language in more or less the same manner, but there are many differences in the way they spell few words.
- British English words that end in *-re* often end in *-er* in American English. Therefore, 'centre' in British English becomes 'center' in American English. Similarly, fibre in British English becomes fiber in American English.
- British English words ending in *-our* usually end in *-or* in American English. 'Colour' in British English becomes 'color' in American English.
- Verbs in British English that can be spelled with either -ize or -ise at the end are always spelled with -ize at the end in American English. For example, 'organise' or 'organize' in British English becomes 'organize' in American English.
- Verbs in British English that end in *-yse* are always spelled *-yze* in American English. 'Analyse' in British English is spelled as 'analyze' in American English.
- British English words that are spelled with the double vowels *ae* or *oe* are just spelled with an *e* in American English.
- Some nouns that end with *-ence* in British English are spelled *-ense* in American English. 'Defence' in British English is spelled 'defense' in American English.
- Some nouns that end with *-ogue* in British English end with either *-og* or *-ogue*in American English.

NOTES

## 7.5 KEY WORDS

- **Penal colonies:** They were settlements that were used to exile prisoners and separate them from the general population by placing them in a remote location, often an island or distant colonial territory.
- **Colonial expansion:** It refers to the policy or practice wherein a wealthy or powerful nation maintains or extends its control over other countries by establishing settlements or exploiting resources.
- **Hegemony:** It is the political, economic, or military predominance or control of one state over others.

## 7.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Name the countries that were impacted by the colonial expansion of Europe.
2. Write a short note on the impact of colonial expansion on the global status of English.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Examine the differences between American English and British English.

## 7.7 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

Jindal, D.V. and Pushpinder Syal. 2007. *An Introduction to Linguistics: Language, Grammar and Semantics.* New Delhi: PHI Learning.

Baugh, A.C. and Thomas Cable. 1993. *A History of the English Language.* New Delhi: Taylor and Francis.

NOTES

# BLOCK - III
# SPOKEN ENGLISH

# UNIT 8 SPEECH AND VOWELS

**Structure**



## 8.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit delves into the respiratory, phonatory and articulatory systems and attempts to understand its role as organs of speech. The speech sounds are basically divided into two categories namely, vowels and consonants. A vowel can be defined as a sound which is produced when the air stream passes through the mouth or through the oral passage without any obstruction. The classifications of vowels have been discussed in this unit. Accent or stress refers to the force of voice with which a syllable is pronounced. The concept of rhythm has also been discussed in the unit.

## 8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the role of respiratory, phonatory and articulatory system in speech functions
- Discuss cardinal vowels
- Examine the classifications of diphthongs
- Understand the importance of accent and rhythm

## 8.2 ORGANS OF SPEECH

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One of the chief characteristics of human beings is their ability to communicate with their fellow human beings. Human beings do not communicate only through body language but also through sounds that have meaning. Phonetics (from the Greek word *phōnē* which means 'sound' or 'voice') is a branch of linguistics that studies the sounds of human speech. Phonetics is concerned with the physical properties of speech sounds or signs, which are called phones; their physiological production, acoustic properties, auditory perception and neurophysiological status. Phonology, on the other hand, is concerned with the abstract, grammatical characterization of the systems of sounds or signs.

In other words, we can say that the air that we breathe out is modified in various ways. This results in various combinations of sounds such as consonants and vowels. Therefore, speech is also sometimes referred to as 'modified breathing'. The organs of speech and their speech functions can be described with reference to three systems as follows:

- The respiratory system
- The phonatory system
- The articulatory system

### The Respiratory System

The respiratory system comprises the lungs, the muscles of the chest and the windpipe (also known as trachea). The primary function of the lungs is to breathe or respire. The muscles of the chest expand and contract to let the air flow in and out. The function of the respiratory system is to let the air pass through the windpipe (trachea) towards the glottis so that it produces sounds.

### The Phonatory System

The phonatory system of human beings consists of the larynx in the throat. When the air comes out of the lungs, it is modified in the upper part of the trachea where the larynx is situated. The larynx is a muscular structure in the front part of the neck and is also known as the 'Adam's apple.' It contains a pair of muscular bands or folds which are called vocal cords. They are placed horizontally from the front to the back, and are joined at the front bit separated at the back. The space between the cords is called the glottis.

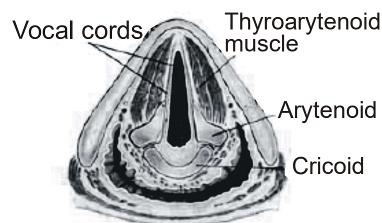



***Fig. 8.1*** *The Phonatory System*

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As the vocal cords are separated at the back to let the air flow out, it can assume many positions. Based on the opening of the vocal cords, we can primarily talk about three important kinds of sounds that are produced:

1. **Voiceless sounds**: When the vocal cords are spread apart, the air from the lungs passes between them unimpeded, and the sounds produced is described as voiceless sounds**.** Examples are sounds in English—sit, sheet, fever, think.
2. **Voiced sounds:** When the vocal cords are loosely held together, the air passes through them and causes vibration in the vocal chords. The sounds created in this manner are called voiced sounds. For example, the consonantal sounds in English such as veil, these, zoo, me, nose are all voiced sounds.

**Facts to remember**

It should be noted here that whereas all English vowels are voiced, some English consonants are voiced, some are voiceless.

3. **Glottal stop:** The vocal cords are tightly held together so that no air can escape from them. They are suddenly drawn apart and an explosive sound is created. This is known as glottal stop. The sounds in English such as aunt, end and apple are examples of glottal stop.

### The Articulatory System

The air that we breathe out passes through the vocal cords. It is modified further in different parts of the oral and nasal cavities to produce different sounds. The various articulators such as pharynx, lips, teeth, teeth ridge, hard palate, soft palate, uvula and tongue take different positions to make different sounds.

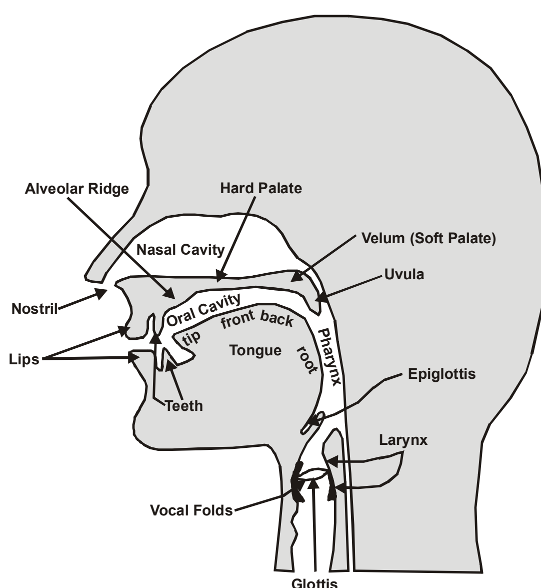



***Fig. 8.2*** *The Articulatory System*

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**The pharynx:** The pharynx extends from the top of the larynx to the root of the tongue which lies opposite to it. The muscles of the pharynx modify the shape and size of the pharyngeal cavity by contracting and expanding. It can also be modified by the back of the tongue, by the position of the soft palate and by the raising and lowering of the larynx.

**The lips:** The lips also have an important role to play in the production of the speech sounds. For example, the consonant sounds such as 'p' and 'b' are produced by closing of the lips tightly and then releasing the closure abruptly to let out the air built up behind the closure.

**The teeth:** Some consonants are produced with the help of teeth, such as 'think and 'that' in English.

**The teeth ridge:** The teeth ridge is the alveolar ridge. It is the convex part of the roof of the mouth lying just behind the upper teeth. Sounds such as 'top' and 'drill' are a result of the alveolar ridge.

**The hard palate:** The hard bony surface in the alveolar ridge along the roof of the mouth is the hard palate.

**The soft palate:** In the alveolar ridge, where the bony structure ends, the roof of the mouth becomes soft and it is called soft palate or the velum.

**The uvula:** At the end of the soft palate, there is a small pendant like fleshly tongue which is known as uvula.

**The tongue:** The tongue is one of the most effective articulators as it is flexible and can take different shapes and positions which are significant in speech production.

### 8.2.1 Speech Mechanism

We will now discuss the concept of airstream speech mechanism.

#### A Speech Event

A speech event comprises of a series of operations. An idea first emerges in the mind of the speaker and its linguistic codification is transmitted by the nerves to the speech organs, which are set in motion. The movements of these organs set up disturbances in the air, and the: e sound waves are received by the listener's ear. The nervous system carries the message to the brain where it is interpreted in linguistic terms. It is necessary that the speaker and the listener must share the same linguistic code so that the communication takes place in an effective manner.

#### The Production of Speech

The energy for the production of speech is generally provided by the airstream coming out of the lungs. At the top of the wind-pipe or the trachea, is the larynx that consists of the vocal cords. The vocal cords can be brought together or kept apart and the opening between them is known as the glottis. When we cough, the glottis is tightly closed and the air from the lungs is held up beneath it and then suddenly

released. When we breathe out, the glottis is held open. If the vocal cords are held sufficiently close together, they vibrate when the air from the lungs passes between them. This vibration produces voice. The speech sounds can be voiced or voiceless.

NOTES

The airstream is also modified by the resonating cavities above the larynx- the pharynx, the mouth and the nasal cavity. The shape of the mouth cavity depends on the positions of the tongue and the lips. The mouth is divided into three parts: the alveolar ridge or teeth ridge just behind the upper teeth: the hard palate; and the soft palate or velum, the end of which is called the uvula. The soft palate can be lowered to let the air escape through the nose. This is the normal position in breathing. If the mouth passage is also open, a nasalized vowel, as in Hindi 'are 'is produced. If no air escapes through the mouth, a nasal consonant is produced, e.g., English / m / and / n / in man and sing is produced.

The lips can be held close together or far apart. They can be spread, neutral, open or rounded.

The tongue can be considered as having three sections. The part opposite the teeth ridge is called the blade, its end being called the tip. The part opposite the hard palate is called the front and that opposite the soft palate is called the back. In the production of vowel sounds, the tip of the tongue is generally kept low, and some other part of the tongue – the front, the centre or the back is raised towards the roof of the mouth.

The various parts of the tongue can make a contact with, or be brought very near the roof of the mouth to produce different consonant sounds.

### Speech Mechanism: The Airstream Mechanism

The air-mechanism helps in producing the airstream. There are three main airstream mechanisms which are as follows:

- **The Pulmonic air stream mechanism**: It consists of the lungs and the respiratory muscles. The walls of the lungs act as the initiator and the air from the lungs is pushed out.
- **Glottalic air stream mechanism**: The closed glottis acts as the initiator and pharynx helps in throwing the air in and out.
- **Velaric air stream mechanism**: The back of the tongue is the initiator. Sounds are produced with a velaric ingressive mechanism that exists in several African languages.

**Check Your Progress**

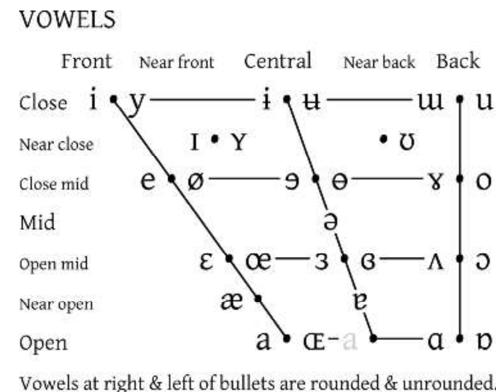
1. What is the function of the respiratory system?
2. What are the three sounds produced on the basis of the opening of the vocal cords?
3. Give examples of glottal stop.
4. What are the three main airstream mechanisms?

NOTES

## 8.3 CARDINAL VOWELS: DEFINITION

While the consonant sounds are mostly articulated via closure or obstruction in the vocal tract, vowel sounds are produced with a relatively free flow of air. They are all typically voiced. To describe vowel sounds, what is significant is the way in which the tongue influences the 'shape' through which the airflow must pass. To talk about a place of articulation, we think of the space inside the mouth as having a front versus a back and a high versus a low area. Thus, in the pronunciation of *heat* and *hit*, we talk about 'high, front' vowels because the sound is made with the front part of the tongue in a raised position.

In contrast, the vowel sound in *hat* is produced with the tongue in a lower position and the sound in *hot* can be described as a 'low, back' vowel. The next time you're facing the mirror, try saying the words *heat*, *hit*, *hat*, *hot*. For the first two, your mouth will stay fairly closed, but for the last two, your tongue will move lower and cause your mouth to open wider. The terminology for describing vowel sounds in English (e.g. 'high front') is usually based on their position in a chart, like the one shown here, which provides a means of classifying the most common vowel sounds.



Vowels at right & left of bullets are rounded & unrounded.

| Vowel sounds | | |
|---|---|---|
| No. | Symbol | Examples |
| 1 | /iː/ | feet /fiːt/ leap /liːp/ |
| 2 | /ɪ/ | fit /fɪt/ lip /lɪp/ |
| 3 | /e/ | men /men/ bed /bed/ |
| 4 | /æ/ | man /mæn/ bad /bæd/ |
| 5 | /ʌ/ | mud /mʌd/ nut /nʌt/ |
| 6 | /ɑː/ | fast /fɑːst/ pass /pɑːs/ |
| 7 | /ɒ/ | top /tɒp/ rock /rɒk/ |
| 8 | /ɔː/ | fall /fɔːl/ lord /lɔːd/ |
| 9 | /ʊ/ | book /bʊk/ foot /fʊt/ |
| 10 | /uː/ | boot /buːt/ food /fuːd/ |
| 11 | /ɜː/ | girl /gɜːl/ bird /bɜːd/ |
| 12 | /ə/ | a lot /ə'lɒt/<br>apart /ə'pɑːt/ |
| 13 | /eɪ/ | mail /meɪl/ May /meɪ/ |
| 14 | /aɪ/ | fly /flaɪ/ buy /baɪ/ |
| 15 | /ɔɪ/ | boy /bɔɪ/ boil /bɔɪl/ |
| 16 | /aʊ/ | cow /kaʊ/ house /haʊs/ |
| 17 | /əʊ/ | sold /səʊld/ low /ləʊ/ |
| 18 | /ɪə/ | beer /bɪə/ dear /dɪə/ |
| 19 | /eə/ | hair /heə/ rare /reə/ |

### Diphthongs

These 'combined' vowel sounds are called **diphthongs**, in the sense that two vowel sounds are uttered in the same syllable. Following are the examples of Diphthongs in English:

NOTES

| Standard English diphthongs | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | RP (British) | Australian | American | |
| | | | GA | Canadian |
| *low* | [əʊ̯] | [əʉ̯] | [oʊ̯] | |
| *loud* | [aʊ̯] | [æɔ̯] | [aʊ̯] | [aʊ̯] |
| *lout* | | | | [əʊ̯] |
| *lied* | [aɪ̯] | [ɑe̯] | [aɪ̯] | |
| *light* | | | [əɪ̯] | |
| *lane* | [eɪ̯] | [æɪ̯] | [eɪ̯] | |
| *loin* | [ɔɪ̯] | [oɪ̯] | [ɔɪ̯] | |
| *loon* | [uː] | [ʉː] | [ʊu̯] | |
| *lean* | [iː] | [ɪi̯] | [ɪi̯] | |
| *leer* | [ɪə̯] | [ɪə̯] | [ɪɚ̯] | |
| *lair* | [ɛə̯] | [eː] | [ɛɚ̯] | |
| *lure* | [ʊə̯] | [ʊə̯] | [ʊɚ̯] | |

We will discuss diphthongs later on in the unit.

## 8.4 DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF VOWELS

Speech sounds are classified as vowels and consonants. Bloomfield defines a vowel as 'modifications of the voice-sound that involve no closure, friction or contact of the tongue or lips'. According to Daniel Jones, a vowel is 'a voiced sound in forming in which the air issues in a continuous stream through the pharynx and mouth, there being no obstruction and no narrowing such as would cause audible friction.' Thus, when a vowel sound is produced, the active articulator is raised towards the passive articulator in such a manner that there is a sufficient gap between the two for air to escape through the mouth without friction. For example, while speaking the word 'art', air escapes freely and continuously without any friction while pronouncing the first sound /a: /.

From the definitions of a vowel, it can be concluded that the characteristic qualities of vowels depends on the shape of the open passage above the larynx which forms a resonance chamber modifying the quality of the sounds produced by the vibration of the vocal chords. Different shapes of the passage modify the quality in different ways, producing distinct vowel sounds. The chief organs concerned in modifying the shape of the passage are the tongue and the lips. Vowels are classified for linguistic purposes according to the position of the tongue. The tongue may be kept low in the mouth or raised in varying degrees in the front towards the hard palate or in the back towards the soft palate. These positions produce what are called open and closed vowels, with dependent variants, half open and half close. Different degrees of openness and closeness also depend on the extent of the opening between the upper and lower jaws. Open vowels may

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also be distinguished as front or back depending on the part of the tongue that is highest, but the latitude of variation when the tongue is low in the mouth is more restricted. The tongue may also produce central or neutral vowels, which are neither distinctively back nor front if it is raised centrally in the mouth. The lip features which distinguish vowel qualities may vary independently of the position and height of the tongue, though obviously the more open vowel positions give less scope for lip spreading and for strong lip rounding, because the jaw and mouth are wide open.

In phonetics, a vowel is a sound in spoken language, like English ah! or oh! which is pronounced with an open vocal tract so that there is no build-up of air pressure at any point above the glottis. This contrasts with consonants, like English sh! where there is a constriction or closure at some point along with the vocal tract. A vowel is also thought of to be syllabic: an equivalent open but non-syllabic sound is known as semi-vowel.

In all languages, vowels form the nucleus or peak of syllables, whereas consonants make the onset and (in languages that have them) coda.

Without reference to any particular language, eight vowel sounds, articulated at fixed positions of the tongue and lips, four front and four back, have been recorded as cardinal vowels and transcribed as [i], [e], [a], [o], [u].

There are twelve pure vowels in English and eight vowel glides or diphthongs. There is an argument between the phonetic definition of 'vowel' (a sound made with no constriction in the vocal tract) and the phonological definition (a sound that makes the peak of a syllable). The approximants [j] and [w] describe this conflict: both are made without any constriction in the vocal tract (so phonetically they seem to be vowel-like), but they occur on the edge of syllables, like at the beginning of the English words 'yet' and 'wet' (that suggests that phonologically they are consonants). The American linguist Kenneth Pike suggested the terms 'vocoid' for a phonetic vowel and 'vowel' for a phonological vowel, so by using this terminology, [j] and [w] are classified as vocoids but not as vowels.

The word vowel comes from the Latin word *vocalis*, which means 'speaking', as in most languages words and so speech is not possible without vowels. In English, the word vowel is basically used to describe both vowel sounds and the written symbols that describe them.

**Description of vowels**

The phonetics of English is given in detail in books like Daniel Jones' *Outline of English Phonetics*, Gimson's *Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* and Ward's *Phonetics of English*.

1. **Front vowels:** There are four front vowels in English. A front vowel is a type of vowel sound used in some spoken languages. The defining characteristic of a front vowel is that the tongue is positioned as far in front as possible in the mouth without creating a constriction that would

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be classified as a consonant. Front vowels are sometimes also called bright vowels as they are perceived as sounding brighter than the back vowels.

- /i/: It is a short, front, unrounded vowel just above the half-close position. It can occur initially as in it /it/, medially as in bit /bit/ and finally as in city /siti/.
- /i:/: It is a long, front, close unrounded vowel which can occur initially as in yield /i:ld/, medially as in wheat /wi:t/ and finally as in sea /si:/.
- /e/: It is a short, front, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open. It occurs initially as in elephant /elifnt/ and medially as in met /met/.
- //: It is a front, unrounded vowel just below the half-open position. It occurs initially as in ant /nt/ and medially as in man/mn/.

2. **Back vowels:** A back vowel is a type of vowel sound used in some spoken languages. The defining characteristic of a back vowel is that the tongue is positioned as far back as possible in the mouth without creating a constriction that would be classified as a consonant. Back vowels are sometimes also called dark vowels as they are perceived as sounding darker than the front vowels. There are five back vowels in English:
   - /a/: It is a back, open, unrounded vowel, which occurs in all the three positions. For example, initially in art /a:t/, medially in part /pa:t/ and finally in papa /ppa:/.
   - /o/: It is a short, back, rounded vowel just above the open position. It occurs initially as in on /n/, and medially as in cot /kt/ .
   - /o/: It is a long, back rounded vowel between half-open and half-close. It occurs in the initial position as in ought /t/, medial position as in bought /bt/ and finally as in law /l/.
   - /u/: It is a short, back, rounded vowel, a little centralized and just above the half-close position. It does not occur initially but medially in put /put/ and finally as in to /tu/.
   - /u:/: It is a back, long, close rounded vowel. It occurs initially as in ooze /u:z/, medially in booze /bu:z/ and finally in too /tu:/.
3. **Central vowels:** A central vowel is a type of vowel sound used in some spoken languages. The defining characteristic of a central vowel is that the tongue is positioned halfway between a front vowel and a back vowel. There are three central vowels in English:
   - /u/: It is a central, unrounded vowel just above the open position. It occurs initially as in utter / /, and medially in butter / /.

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- /o/: It is a central, unrounded vowel just below half-open. It occurs in all the three positions – initially in upon / /, medially in forget / / and finally in tailor / /.
- /e/: It is a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open positions. It occurs in all the three positions – initially in earthly / /, medially in bird / / and finally in river / /.

When a vowel comes finally in a word, it is much longer than when it occurs initially. Similarly, if it occurs after a voiced sound, it will be longer. For example, as in bee /bi:/, bead /bi:d/,beat /bi:t/. Vowels may also be characterized by what in linguistic terms is called retro flexion or the slight upward turning of the tip of the tongue towards the centre of the hard palate. Retro flexion is one of the characteristics of the American accent. It also occurs in some dialects of British English in the pronunciation of words spelt with an 'r' after a vowel (as in hard, word, etc.). It is also possible to make all kinds of vowel sounds with nasalization, that is, with the soft palate lowered and with the air passing partly through the nasal cavity and nostrils as well as through the mouth.

**Check Your Progress**

5. Give an example of diphthong.
6. Define vowel.
7. How many pure vowels and diphthongs are there in English?

## 8.5 DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF DIPHTHONGS

A diphthong or vowel glide is a combination of two short vowels. Generally, English vowels are characterized by lip-spreading in case of front vowels and lip-rounding in back vowels. In the pronunciation of long vowels, a relatively constant articulatory position is maintained but a temporary equivalent articulation may be made by moving from one vowel position to another through the intervening positions. In such a situation, it is necessary for the glide to take place within the same syllable. When the diphthong is lengthened, the first element is lengthened and the second element is very short. Therefore, this phenomenon is called falling diphthong.

- /ei/: It is the result of a glide from a front, unrounded vowel just below the half-close position to one just above half-close. It occurs initially in ate /eit/ , medially in race /reis/ and finally in day /dei/.
- /ai/: It is a glide from a front, open, unrounded vowel to a centralized front, unrounded vowel just above half-close. It occurs initially in ice /ais/, medially in bite /bait/ and finally in bye /bai/.

- /o/: This is a glide from a back, unrounded vowel between open and half-open to a centralized, front, unrounded vowel just above the half-close position. In the beginning, the lips are rounded but as the glide moves towards RP /i/, the lips are unrounded. It occurs in all the three positions – initially in oil //, medially in boil / / and finally in boy / /.
- / /or /ou/: It is a glide from a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open to a centralized, back, rounded vowel just above the half-close position. Initially, it occurs in own /oun/, medially in boat /bout/ and finally in go /gou/.
- /u/: The glide begins at the back, open unrounded position and moves in the direction of RP /u/. It occurs initially in out / /, medially in shout / / and finally in how / /.
- /e/: It is a glide from a centralized, front, unrounded vowel just above half-close to a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open positions. It occurs initially in ear / /, medially in fierce / / and finally in fear / /.
- /a/: This is a glide from a front, half-open, unrounded vowel to a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open positions. It occurs initially in aeroplane //, medially in careful / / and finally in fair / /.
- /o/: It is glide from a centralized, back, rounded vowel just above half-close to a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open. It can occur medially as in touring / /, and finally in tour / /.

### Types of Diphthongs

We will now discuss the types of diphthongs.

- **Falling and rising:** Falling (or descending) diphthongs start with a vowel quality of higher prominence (higher pitch or volume) and end in a semivowel with less prominence, like [aj/] in eye, while rising (or ascending) diphthongs begin with a less prominent semivowel and end with a more prominent full vowel, similar to the [ja] in yard. Note that 'falling' and 'rising' in this context do not refer to vowel height; the terms 'opening' and 'closing' are used instead. The less prominent component in the diphthong may also be transcribed as an approximant, thus [aj] in eye and [ja] in yard. However, when the diphthong is analysed as a single phoneme, both elements are often transcribed with vowel letters (/aj//, /j/a/). Note also that semivowels and approximants are not equivalent in all treatments, and in the English and Italian languages, among others, many phoneticians do not consider rising combinations to be diphthongs, but rather sequences of approximant and vowel. There are many languages (such as Romanian) that contrast one or more rising diphthongs with similar sequences of a glide and a vowel in their phonetic inventory (see semivowel for examples).
- **Closing, opening, and centering:** In closing diphthongs, the second element is closer than the first (e.g. [ai]); in opening diphthongs, the second

element is more open (e.g. [ia]). Closing diphthongs tend to be falling ([ai/ ]), and opening diphthongs are generally rising ([i/a]), as open vowels are more sonorous and therefore tend to be more prominent. However, exceptions to this rule are not rare in the world's languages. In Finnish, for instance, the opening diphthongs /ie// and /uo// are true falling diphthongs, since they begin louder and with higher pitch and fall in prominence during the diphthong.

- **Height-harmonic diphthong:** This diphthong has both elements at the same vowel height. These were particularly characteristic of Old English, which had diphthongs such as /æQ//, /eo//.

  A centering diphthong is one that begins with a more peripheral vowel and ends with a more central one, such as [jY/], [[Y/], and [‘Y/] in Received Pronunciation or [iY/] and [uY/] in Irish. Many centering diphthongs are also opening diphthongs ([iY/], [uY/]).

  Diphthongs may contrast in how far they open or close. For example, Samoan contrasts low-to-mid with low-to-high diphthongs:

  ’ai [“ai/] ‘probably’

  ’ae [“ae/] ‘but’

  ’auro [“au/~o] ‘gold’

  ao [ao/] ‘a cloud’

- **Length:** Languages differ in the length of diphthongs, measured in terms of morae. In languages with phonemically short and long vowels, diphthongs typically behave like long vowels, and are pronounced with a similar length. In languages with only one phonemic length for pure vowels, however, diphthongs may behave like pure vowels. For example, in Iceland, both monophthongs and diphthongs are pronounced long before single consonants and short before most consonant clusters.

Some languages contrast between short and long diphthongs. In some languages, such as Old English, these behave like short and long vowels, occupying one and two morae, respectively. In other languages, however, such as Ancient Greek, they occupy two and three morae, respectively, with the first element rather than the diphthong as a whole behaving as a short or long vowel. Languages that contrast three quantities in diphthongs are extremely rare, but not unheard of; Northern Sami is known to contrast long, short and ‘finally stressed’ diphthongs, the last of which are distinguished by a long second element.

### 8.5.1 Monophthongs and Diphthongs

The places of articulation of vowels are not as distinct for vowels as for consonants. This is primarily because no obstruction of air is taking place in the articulation of vowels. Hence there is no mention of place and manner of articulation. For

classifying vowels three criteria are used: horizontal tongue position, vertical tongue position and lip rounding.
The places of articulation of the monophthongs of RP are given below:

NOTES

***Table 8.1*** *Places of Articulation of Monophthongs*

| | Front | Central | Back | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | unrounded | unrounded | unrounded | rounded |
| Close | /iː/ *beat* | - | - | /uː/ *boot* |
| Half-close | /ɪ/ *bit* | /ə/ *ago* | - | /ʊ/ *put* |
| Half-open | /e/ *bet* | /ɜː/ *burn* | - | /ɔː/ *bought* |
| Open | /æ/ *bat* | /ʌ/ *but* | /ɑː/ *bar* | /ɒ/ *Bob* |

Sometimes the close vowels are also referred to as high, open vowels are called low, while the ones in between as mid. A close look at the above table reveals that front and central vowels are unrounded while back vowels are rounded, except for /a:/.

Another set of sounds available in RP are diphthongs. A diphthong is also called as a vowel glide, as during its articulation tongue position is changed from one vowel position to another. There are eight vowel glides / diphthongs. The places of articulation of the diphthongs of RP are shown in the following table:

***Table 8.2 (i) and (ii)*** *Places of Articulation of Diphthongs*

*(i)*

| | Front | Central | Back | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | unrounded | unrounded | unrounded | rounded |
| Close | | | | |
| Half-close | | | | |
| Half-open | eɪ | əʊ | | ɔɪ |
| Open | | aɪ aʊ | | |

/eɪ/ *bay*
/aɪ/ *bye*
/ɔɪ/ *boy*
/aʊ/ *bound*
/əʊ/ *boat*

*(ii)*

| | Front | Central | Back | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | unrounded | unrounded | unrounded | rounded |
| Close | | | | |
| Half-close | ɪə | | | ʊə |
| Half-open | eə | | | |
| Open | | | | |

/ɪə/ *beer*
/eə/ *bear*
/ʊə/ *boorish*

### 8.5.2 Fronting and Retracting Diphthongs

Diphthongs may be classified in different ways:

(i) On the basis of their second component:

o if it is aschwa /Y/, then we talk about centring diphthongs.

NOTES

- o In other diphthongsthe second component is more close than the first, and thus they are called **closing diphthongs**
- o those that end in /I/ are **fronting** (and closing) while
- o those ending in /u / are **backing** (and closing)

Further, closing diphthongs may be classified as per the articulatory distance between the two components: the diphthongs /eI, /Yu/ are narrow **(**and closing),while the rest, /aI/, /TI/, /au/ are **the** so-called low-starting or wide diphthongs**.** This is summarized in the table below**:**

***Table 8.3*** *Classification of Diphthongs*

| | Centring | Closing | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Fronting | Backing |
| Narrow | ɪə, eə, ʊə | eɪ | əʊ |
| Wide | - | aɪ, ɔɪ | aʊ |

**Check Your Progress**

8. What are diphthongs?
9. What are the three criterias used for classifying vowels?

## 8.6 ACCENT AND RHYTHM

One of the most important feature of English is word accent. It has been observed that in the words that consist of more than one syllable, it is not necessary that each of the syllable is important. The syllables which are prominent have certain kind of accent on them. The dictionaries too indicates the location of word accent, and since there are only few rules related to this concept, it becomes necessary to understand the accentual pattern. The relative prominence of a syllable may be due to stress, that is, greater breath force, greater muscular effort, and greater amplitude of vibration of the vocal cords in the case of voiced sounds. However, in only a few instances, it happens that both the sound and the length contribute to prominence.

The syllable that has a pitch change effect on it are believed to have the tonic or primary accent. The other important syllables have secondary accent. The primary accent is marked with a vertical bar above and in front of the syllable to which it refers, whereas, secondary accent is marked with a bar below and in front of the syllable. A few examples of the accent on syllables are as follows:

NOTES

**Accent on the First Syllable**

'able, ' baggage, 'captain, 'damage, 'eager, 'kidney, 'dentist, 'master, 'package, ' tackle.

**Accent on the Second Syllable**

a' bout, be' cause, ca' nal, de' ceive, ef' fect, en' rol, pos' sess, de' light, be' side, re' course.

**Primary Accent on the First Syllable**

'accident, 'bicycle, 'calcu,late, 'delicate, 'edu, cate, 'recog,nise, 'recti,fy, 'perme,ate, 'foreigner, 'quarrelsome.

**Primary Accent on the Second Syllable**

ac 'custom, com' mittee, de' liver, e' lastic, ho' rizon, py' jama ,re' actor, fa' miliar, sul'phuric, des'cribing.

**Primary Accent on the Third Syllable**

,disap' point, ,entell tain, ,recom'mend, ,under' stand, super'sede, ,millio'naire, ,inhu'mane

**Stress Shift**

It is not necessary that the words from a certain group will have the primary or stress effect on the same syllable. However, the stress shift in case of derivatives is usual, for instance, a'cademy, ,aca' demic, a, cademician , bac'teria, bac, teri' ology, bac, terio' logical, lindi' vidual, ,indi, vidu'ality, ,indil vldua listic, 'politics, po' litical, , poli'tician.

**Historical Reasons**

The reason that is responsible for the complexities which is present in the concept of word accent is in the history. The English language has been primarily drawn from two main sources which are Germanic and Romance. In case of Germanic influence, words generally have the accent at the beginning, whereas in case of the second influence, the last syllable was the most prominent. The intermingling of these two influences has resulted in the accentual patterns of modern English.

The words that consists of a combination of two or more words are known as compound words. The primary accent on such words, is usually only the first element.

**Primary Accent on the First Element**

A few instances of such words are as follows:

- 'anything
- 'backbone
- 'earthquake
- ' goldsmith

However, in a few cases, both the elements are accented, but the tonic accent is on the second element. This is shown by an oblique bar pointing downwards to indicate the tonic accent and a vertical bar to indicate the pre-tonic accent.

NOTES

- ‘after- noon
- ‘half- hour
- ‘ long- lived
- ‘middle- aged
- ‘north- west

In connected speech one of the two accents is dropped to suit the rhythm of the sentence.

**Primary (Tonic) Accent on the Second Element**

- ‘ hot- water- bottle
- ‘waste- paper- basket

**Stress Change According to Function**

In case of the two word syllables, the accentual pattern depends upon whether the word is a noun, an adjective, or a verb. This is so because, in the first syllable, the accent is on the first syllable if the word is an adjective or a noun, whereas in case it is a verb, then the accent is on the second syllable.

***Examples***

- ‘object (n.) ob’ ject (v.)
- ‘perfect (adj.) per’fect (v.)
- ‘produce (n.) pro’ duce (v.)
- ‘progress (n.) pro’ gress(v.)
- ‘record (n.) re’ cord(v.)
- ‘import (n.) im’ port (v.)
- ‘subject (n.) sub‘je¢t(v.)
- ‘increase (n.) in’ crease (v.)

**Word Accent in Indian English**

In English, the patterns present in the word accent are not well organized as the patterns differ according to the usage in different countries. For example, the feature of change in accent according to the function of the word is not always found in Indian English. Similarly, an object is accented on the first syllable, both as a noun and a verb.

Let us now observe some of the examples that indicates that the accentual pattern of Indian English is different as compared to the Received Pronunciation. For instance, conduct (v.), develop, activity, already, correct, expect, hotel,

industrial, mistake, occur and prefer are accented on the first syllable by some speakers instead of the second. Similarly, atmosphere, industry, minister, record (n.), refuge, written and yesterday are accented on the second syllable by some speakers instead of the first.

It is thus, essential that the correct patterns should be observed while conversing with the native English speakers. If consideration is not observed, then it will indicate the unintelligibility of Indian English.

### Rules for Accentual Patterns

The following are the rules that indicate the accentual pattern:

- All English words have either primary or secondary accent whether on the first or seconds syllable.
- Words with weak prefixes are accented on the root, and not the prefix, e.g., a' broad, a' cross, ad' mit, ad' vice, a'head, a'lone, aloud, a'mount, a' part, attend, below, be'tween, com'pose, cor" rect, ,de'velop, ex'pect, oc'cur, pre' fer, re' duce. The inflectional suffixes -es, -ing, -ed, and the following derivational suffixes do not affect the accent: -age, -dom, -en, -er,-ess, -ful, -fy, -less, -let, -ly, -ment, -ness, -or, -some, -ward.

*For instance,*

- match ' matches
- be'gin, be' ginning
- want, 'wanted
- break, 'breakage
- free, 'freedom
- bright, 'brighten
- board, 'boarder
- god, 'goddess
- care, 'careful `
- class, 'classify
- aim, 'aimless
- book, 'booklet
- bad, 'badly
- ap' point, ap' pointment
- ' bitter, ' bittemess
- 'conquer, 'conqueror
- fear 'fearsome ,
- back ' backward

NOTES

- Words ending in -ion observe the primary accent on the last syllable but one, e.g., ,appli'cation, ,civili'zation, ,compo'sition, ,conver'sation, ,culti'vation, de,termi'natien, ex,ami'nation, i,magi'nation. , intro duction,qualiti'cation.
- Words ending in -ic, -ical, -icaIly have the primary accent on the syllable preceding the suffix, e.g., a,polo'getic, e'lectric, ,scien'tific, ,sympa'thetic, ,sympa'thefltically.
- Words ending in -ity, are 'accented on the syllable preceding the suffix, that is, on the third syllable from the end-the ante-penultimate syllable, e.g., ac'tivity, curi'osity, elec'tricity, e'quality,gene'rosity, mo'rality, ne'cessity, o,rigi'nality, ,possi'bilifty, ,proba'bility.
- Words ending in -ial, -ially have the primary accent on the syllable preceding the suffix, e.g.,arti'ticial ,cere'monial, ,conti'dential, ,conti'dentially, es'sential, es'sentially, in'dustrial, me'morial, of'ficial, ,presi'dential.'
- In words of more than two syllables ending in -ate, the primary accent is placed two syllables before the suffix, that is, on the third syllable from the end, e.g., 'compli,cate, 'culti,vate, 'edu,cate, 'fortunate, 'separate (adj.), 'sepa, rate (v.)
- Words ending in -ian are accented on the syllable preceding the suffix, e.g.,elec'trician, li'brarian, mu'sician, poli'tician.
- Words ending in -ious are accented on the syllable preceding the suffix, e.g., 'anxious, in'dustrious, in'jurious, laborious. lu' xurious, re'bel|ious, vic'torious.
- The following suffixes take the primary accent on their first syllable:
  - -aire ,millio'naire,
  - -eer, ca'reer,
  - -ental, funda' mental
  - -ential, exis'tential
  - -esce, acqui'esce
  - -escence, effer' vescence
  - -esque, gro'tesque
  - -ique, phy'sique
  - -iris, neu'ritis

## Rhythm

When we form sentences by combining the words, it has been found that the accented syllables tend to recur at regular intervals of time. For example, in the

sentence, 'That's not the book I wanted', the time intervals between the beginning of the strong syllables /not/, /'buk/ and /'wont/ will be approximately the same. It is thus, that provides English with its characteristic rhythm and if this feature, is not given importance, and it may suggest the lack of intelligibility.

**NOTES**

The most important thing that should be observed from the point of view of the learner is the fact that a knowledge should be provided to him or her regarding the formation of accent in a sentence. The primarily thing that should be kept in mind is the fact that the syllables of words which receive primary accent when the word is pronounced in isolation are potentially those which will receive the accent when the word occurs in a sentence. Thus, in case of the two-syllable word about /YÙ'baut/ the first syllable is unaccented and the second accented; when about is found in connected speech, the first syllable could not be accented and the second might or might not be, depending on the rhythmic balance of the sentence and the relative importance ascribed by the speaker to its different semantic constituents.

In the sentence 'They're coming about nine,' the second syllable of about is not accented, as the most important parts of the sentence from the point of view of meaning are the fact that some people are coming, and the time at which they are coming. On the other hand, in the sentence 'She doesn't know what she's about', the second syllable of about receives the primary (or tonic) accent, because the word is semantically important and because it occupies a position in the sentence where, given the position of the other two strong syllables, another strong syllable would become necessary because of the rhythm of the sentence as a whole. Accent at the level of the sentence is therefore, much freer than in the word. However, certain kinds of words according to the nature of their function, are likely to be more important in conveying the meaning of the whole utterance or are more likely than others to receive accent in the sentence. Such kind of words can be nouns, main verbs, adjectives, adverbs and demonstrative and interrogative pronouns. The following are the examples of such a case,

- He 'came 'late to the ñoffice.
- 'Nobody 'took any ñnotice of him.
- There's 'nothing to be ñdone about it.
- I'd 'like to 'know who ñbroke it.
- He's 'going to 'meet us at the ñstation.

In these sentences, the tonic accent is indicated by an oblique bar that is pointed downwards. It has also been observed that the words that are normally accented in native English are sometimes left unaccented in case of Indian English. This is one of the primarily reason that the Indian English is sometimes unintelligible to native English speakers. This feature is particularly noticeable in noun phrases, where either the headword or one of the modifiers is sometimes left unaccented by Indian speakers. The said statement can be observed from the following examples:

NOTES

- ‘several other things - other not accented; close juncture between several and other.
- ‘chemical engineering - engineering not accented
- ‘Indian Students’ – Students not accented.
- ‘Urban centres- centres not accented.
- ‘eighty-nine- nine not accented
- a ‘great need of - need not accented
- Bi’har State ‘Transport- State not accented.
- ‘East Godavari ‘District- Godavari not accented; close juncture between East and Godavari
- ‘Central Institute of- Institute not accented.
- ‘Arts College- College not accented

**Check Your Progress**

10. Give an example of stress shift.
11. What are the historical reasons for accentual patterns in English?

## 8.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The function of the respiratory system is to let the air pass through the windpipe (trachea) towards the glottis so that it produces sounds.
2. Based on the opening of the vocal cords, we can primarily talk about three important kinds of sounds that are produced. They are voiceless sounds, voiced sounds and glottal stop.
3. The sounds in English such as aunt, end and apple are examples of glottal stop.
4. The three main airstream mechanisms are the pulmonic air stream mechanism, glottalic air stream mechanism and Velaric air stream mechanism.
5. Examples of diphthong are words such as ‘loud’ and ‘lied’.
6. Bloomfield defines a vowel as ‘modifications of the voice-sound that involve no closure, friction or contact of the tongue or lips’.
7. There are twelve pure vowels in English and eight vowel glides or diphthongs.
8. A diphthong or vowel glide is a combination of two short vowels.
9. For classifying vowels three criteria are used: horizontal tongue position, vertical tongue position and lip rounding.

NOTES

10. It is not necessary that the words from a certain group will have the primary or stress effect on the same syllable. Example of this is the shift in stress in words a'cademy, ,aca' demic, and a, cademician.
11. The English language has been primarily drawn from two sources which are Germanic and Romance. In case of Germanic influence, words usually have an accent at the beginning, whereas in case of second influence, the last syllable was the most prominent. The intermingling of these two influences has resulted in the accentual patterns of modern English.

## 8.8 SUMMARY

- Human beings do not communicate only through body language but also through sounds that have meaning. Phonetics is concerned with the physical properties of speech sounds or signs, which are called phones; their physiological production, acoustic properties, auditory perception and neurophysiological status. Phonology, on the other hand, is concerned with the abstract, grammatical characterization of the systems of sounds or signs.
- The organs of speech and their speech functions can be described with reference to three systems:
  - o The respiratory system
  - o The phonatory system
  - o The articulatory system
- The respiratory system comprises the lungs, the muscles of the chest and the windpipe (also known as trachea). The primary function of the lungs is to breathe or respire. The function of the respiratory system is to let the air pass through the windpipe (trachea) towards the glottis so that it produces sounds.
- The phonatory system of human beings consists of the larynx in the throat. When the air comes out of the lungs, it is modified in the upper part of the trachea where the larynx is situated. As the vocal cords are separated at the back to let the air flow out, it can assume many positions. Based on the opening of the vocal cords, we can primarily talk about three important kinds of sounds that are produced. They are voiceless sounds, voiced sounds and glottal stop.
- The air that we breathe out passes through the vocal cords. It is modified further in different parts of the oral and nasal cavities to produce different sounds. The various articulators such as pharynx, lips, teeth, teeth ridge, hard palate, soft palate, uvula and tongue take different positions to make different sounds.

NOTES

- The energy for the production of speech is generally provided by the airstream coming out of the lungs. If the vocal cords are held sufficiently close together, they vibrate when the air from the lungs passes between them. This vibration produces voice. The speech sounds can be voiced or voiceless.
- The airstream is also modified by the resonating cavities above the larynx-the pharynx, the mouth and the nasal cavity. The lips can be held close together or far apart. They can be spread, neutral, open or rounded. The various parts of the tongue can make a contact with, or be brought very near the roof of the mouth to produce different consonant sounds.
- While the consonant sounds are mostly articulated via closure or obstruction in the vocal tract, vowel sounds are produced with a relatively free flow of air.
- To talk about a place of articulation, we think of the space inside the mouth as having a front versus a back and a high versus a low area. Thus, in the pronunciation of heat and hit, we talk about 'high, front' vowels because the sound is made with the front part of the tongue in a raised position. In contrast, the vowel sound in hat is produced with the tongue in a lower position and the sound in hot can be described as a 'low, back' vowel.
- The 'combined' vowel sounds are called diphthongs as two vowel sounds are uttered in the same syllable.
- Speech sounds are classified as vowels and consonants. Bloomfield defines a vowel as 'modifications of the voice-sound that involve no closure, friction or contact of the tongue or lips'.
- There are twelve pure vowels in English and eight vowel glides or diphthongs.
- There are four front vowels in English. The defining characteristic of a front vowel is that the tongue is positioned as far in front as possible in the mouth without creating a constriction that would be classified as a consonant.
- The defining characteristic of a back vowel is that the tongue is positioned as far back as possible in the mouth without creating a constriction that would be classified as a consonant.
- The defining characteristic of a central vowel is that the tongue is positioned halfway between a front vowel and a back vowel. There are three central vowels in English.
- A diphthong or vowel glide is a combination of two short vowels.
- Falling (or descending) diphthongs start with a vowel quality of higher prominence (higher pitch or volume) and end in a semivowel with less prominence, like [aj/] in eye, while rising (or ascending) diphthongs begin with a less prominent semivowel and end with a more prominent full vowel, similar to the [ja] in yard.

NOTES

- In closing diphthongs, the second element is closer than the first (e.g. [ai]); in opening diphthongs, the second element is more open (e.g. [ia]). Closing diphthongs tend to be falling ([ai/]), and opening diphthongs are generally rising ([i/a]), as open vowels are more sonorous and therefore tend to be more prominent.
- The places of articulation of vowels are not as distinct for vowels as for consonants. This is primarily because no obstruction of air is taking place in the articulation of vowels. For classifying vowels three criteria are used: horizontal tongue position, vertical tongue position and lip rounding.
- One of the most important feature of English is word accent. It has been observed that in the words that consist of more than one syllable, it is not necessary that each of the syllable is important. The syllables which are prominent have certain kind of accent on them.
- The primary accent is marked with a vertical bar above and in front of the syllable to which it refers, whereas, secondary accent is marked with a bar below and in front of the syllable.
- It is not necessary that the words from a certain group will have the primary or stress effect on the same syllable. However, the stress shift in vase of derivatives is usual, for instance, a'cademy, ,aca' demic, a, cademician.
- In case of the two word syllables, the accentual pattern depends upon whether the word is a noun, an adjective, or a verb. This is so because, in the first syllable, the accent is on the first syllable if the word is an adjective or a noun, whereas in case it is a verb, then the accent is on the second syllable.
- When we form sentences by combining the words, it has been found that the accented syllables tend to recur at regular intervals of time. It provides English with its characteristic rhythm and if this feature, is not given importance, and it may suggest the lack of intelligibility.

## 8.9 KEY WORDS

- **Glottis:** The space between the vocal cords is known as glottis.
- **Vowel:** Bloomfield defines a vowel as 'modifications of the voice-sound that involve no closure, friction or contact of the tongue or lips'.
- **Diphthong:** It is a combination of two short vowels.
- **Accent:** It refers to that property of a syllable which makes it stand out in an utterance relative to its neighbouring syllables.

## 8.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the various articulators that comprises the articulatory system.
2. How are speech sounds produced?
3. What is a falling diphthong?
4. Write a short note on the places of articulation of monophthongs and diphthongs.
5. What are the patterns for accent in Indian English?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the importance of the respiratory, phonatory and articulatory system with respect to speech functions.
2. Discuss the classification of vowels in English.
3. Examine the different types of Diphthong.
4. Discuss the rules for accentual patterns in English.

## 8.11 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

Jindal, D.V. and Pushpinder Syal. 2007. *An Introduction to Linguistics: Language, Grammar and Semantics.* New Delhi: PHI Learning.

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# UNIT 9 STRESS AND INTONATION

NOTES

**Structure**



## 9.0 INTRODUCTION

Stress is the relative emphasis given to certain words in a sentence. On the other hand, the term intonation refers to the rise or fall of the pitch of voice. It is important to note that certain rules have been put in place to specify which syllable should be stressed in a word. In a similar vein, the stress in a sentence depends on certain factors such as the context and the speaker's intention. This unit will discuss in detail the concept of tonic accent and the intonational functions. The concept of elision, assimilation and juncture will also be explained.

## 9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand word stress and sentence stress
- Discuss the types and functions of intonations
- Explain with examples the concept of elision, assimilation and juncture

## 9.2 WORD STRESS

We have already come across the way the vowels and consonants in different combinations produce words and how the words are categorized into syllables. Each syllable has an obligatory vowel sound and one, two or more consonantal sounds. These syllables make up a word. When there is merely one syllable, the

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stress is obviously on that particular syllable. But when there is more than one syllable in a word, then one syllable gets more stress than the other. For example, in the word 'all', which is monosyllabic, the stress is one the syllable 'all'. But when we speak the word, 'almost', there is more stress on 'al' than the syllable 'most'.

**Some definitions of stress**

- Stress is the force used in speaking. (Palmer)
- Stress is the relative degree of force with which a syllable is uttered. (Daniel Jones)
- Stress is the degree of loudness or intensity upon some syllable which makes it louder and more prominent than unstressed syllables. (Bloch &Trager)

Stress is usually studied from two points of view: production and perception. The production of stressed syllables is said to imply a greater muscular energy than the production of unstressed syllables. That is to say that when there is more than one syllable in a word, the speaker of the word gives more prominence to one syllable than the other(s). From the perceptive point of view, stressed syllables are prominent. There are several factors responsible for such prominence or word stress.

- **Loudness:** When you speak, you are breathing out. When the speaker provides greater muscular energy, the syllables are heard with greater loudness or stress. For example, in the word 'calculation', there are four syllables—'cal', 'cu', 'la', 'tion'. Amongst these four syllables, 'la' receives usually the loudest followed by 'cal', while 'cu' and 'tion' are unstressed syllables.
- **Pitch change:** The pattern of accent in a word also becomes clearer when the prominent syllable of the word is associated with a pitch change. For example, in the two syllabic word 'insult', the first syllable is not only louder. But at the same time, there is a pitch change in the first syllable from high to low, resulting in more emphasis on the first syllable.
- **Quality of the vowel:** The prominence of a syllable in a word also depends on the quality of the vowel that the syllable contains in comparison to the vowels of the neighbouring syllables. The syllable which will have a strong vowel sound will be more stressed than the rest.
- **Quantity:** Sometimes, the quantity or the length of the syllable decides the stress of a syllable in a word.

**Some Rules for Placement of Primary Stress on words**

It is true that the stress in unpredictable and this is all the more true in English. Yet, some general rules can be framed based on certain regularities that are found in

providing stress in words. However it can never be said that these rules are always true in every case. They are significant so as to make us understand that there are certain patterns of stress in English.

1. The first rule which can be exemplified is that all English words more or less have some stress (whether primary or secondary) in the first or second syllable. For example, in the word 'calculation' which has four syllables, the primary stress is in the third syllable but the first syllable has got the secondary stress.
   - Two-syllable words are normally stressed on the first syllable: ***fo****reign2,* ***moun****tain,* ***le****gal*
   - Three-syllable words are normally stressed on the first syllable: ***cha****racter,* ***fa****mily*
   - Words of more than three syllables are normally stressed on the antepenultimate: o**ri**ginal, curi**o**sity
2. The inflectional morphemes or suffixes are not stressed and do not affect the stress in a word. The word 'mistake' becomes 'mistaken' by adding an inflectional morpheme but that does not affect the stress in the word.
3. The following derivational morphemes or suffixes are not stressed and do not affect stress. They are given in Table 9.1.

***Table 9.1*** *Examples of Derivational Morpheme*

| Derivational morpheme | Example |
|---|---|
| -age | Postage, breakage |
| -ance | Appearance, governance |
| -en | Soften, brighten |
| -ence | Subsistence |
| -er | Doer, keeper |
| -ess | Lioness, goddess |
| -ful | Dutiful, faithful |
| -fy | Beautify, classify |
| -hood | Childhood, manhood |
| -ice | Cowardice |
| -ish | Childish, foolish |
| -ive | Creative. attractive |
| -less | Aimless, careless |
| -ly | Faithfully, happily |
| -ment | Government, postponement |
| -ness | Boldness, heaviness |
| -or | Governor |
| -ship | Scholarship |
| -ter | Laughter |
| -ure | Enclosure, failure |
| -y | Bloody, woolly |
| -zen | Citizen |

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4. Some derivational suffixes receive stress and some others affect word stress. In case of these suffixes, the stress is shifted when the suffix is added to the stem. For example, in the word ‘employ’, the primary stress is in the second syllable ’-ploy’, but when we add the suffix ’-ee’ to the stem ’employ’, the new word ’employee’ is formed where there are three syllables and the primary stress shifts to the third syllable.

Another important feature related to stress is the ‘weak forms’. There are many functional or grammatical words in English which can be pronounced in strong and weak forms. There are about forty such words.

The most common weak-form words are:

- THE
- A
- AND
- BUT
- THAT (as a conjunction of relative pronoun)
- THAN
- AT
- FOR
- FROM
- OF
- TO
- AS
- SOME
- CAN, COULD
- HAVE, HAS, HAD
- SHALL, SHOULD
- MUST
- DO, DOES
- AM, IS, ARE, WAS, WERE

To sum up, one can say that words have as many syllables as there are vowel sounds. In English language, depending on the number of vowel sounds, there can be one syllabic (monosyllabic) word, or word consisting of two or more syllables (sometimes the syllable count van go up to seven). All the syllables in the word do not receive similar kind of prominence or stress which makes the language rhythmic or musical.

**Strong Forms**

Now we have before us another interesting and crucial aspect of English rhythm. So far you have studied that the Content words are stressed and uttered more clearly. What happens in the case of the functional words, they have to be uttered quickly so as to maintain the characteristic rhythm of language in normal speech. While speaking, these unstressed words can be realized in two forms: **strong form** or **weak form**. A knowledge and ability to make use of the weak forms of unstressed syllables is very essential if you want to catch the English rhythm.Given below is a table containing the weak forms of some of the most commonly used functional words with examples.

**Read them aloud and practice**

Strong and weak forms of prepositions, conjunctions and auxiliary verbs are discussed below:

**Prepositions**

***Table 9.2*** *Strong and Weak Forms of Prepositions*

| Word | Strong | Weak | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| To | tu: | tə | I want to sleep |
| For | fɔ:(r) | fə(r) | This pen is for you |
| From | frɒm | frəm | Where are you from ? |
| Into | ɪntu: | ɪntə | The boy jumped into the lake |
| Of | ɒv | ə(v) | Vrindavan is on the bank of Yamuna. |
| As | Æz | əz | …as white as cotton… |
| At | Æt | ət | She is at the door. |

**Conjunctions and Pronouns**

***Table 9.3*** *Strong and Weak Forms of Conjuctions and Pronouns*

| Word | Strong Form | Weak Form | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| And | Nd | ənd, ən, n̩ | Sonia and Hari are playing. |
| But | bʌt | bət | But for the sugarthe tea was good. |
| Than | Đæn | ðən | Ravi is taller than Suman. |
| That | ð¾t | ðət | That is my class. |
| You | ju: | jə | Would you like to join us ? |
| Your | ʊə, jɔ: | j\(r) | What is your name? |
| Her | hɜ:(r) | (h)ə(r)* | Give this assignment to her. |

## Auxiliary Verb

*Table 9.4 Strong and Weak Forms of Auxiliary Verbs*

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| Word | Strong Form | Weak Form | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Do | du: | də | Where do you live? |
| Are | ɑ: | ə(r)* | Jai and Mehak are here. |
| Was | wɒz | wəz | I was quite interested. |
| Were | wɜ: | wə(r) | They were bored |
| Would | wʊd | wəd | She said she would be here. |
| Could | kʊd | kəd | What could I do? |
| Should | ʃʊd | §əd | They should be here by now. |
| Can | Kæn | kən | What can you do with it? |
| Must | mʌst | məs(t) | You must be a bit more patient. |

### 9.2.1 Sentence Stress

Connected speech refers to an utterance or utterances consisting of more than one word. In a normal English sentence, certain words are stressed and certain words are not. Normally, 'content words' are stressed. Content words are those that are essential for conveying a message. These are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and demonstratives. Normally, structural words are not stressed. These are words like conjunctions auxiliaries grammatical units such as preparations, articles, and when they don't require an emphasis. Example:

A: Do you speak ENGLISH?

B: "Yes, do' YOU?

A: I can SPEAK but I can't' READ it.

The stress on words in a sentence depends on the context and the speaker's intention. Example:

Look at the boy.

He is a tall boy.

He is a very tall and handsome 'boy.

Stress in a sentence also varies according to what the speaker wants to say. Example:

This is an expensive **hotel** – emphasising that it is a hotel not anything else.

This is an **expensive** hotel – emphasising that it is not a cheap hotel.

**This** is an expensive hotel – emphasising that this hotel, and not the other.

This is an **expensive hotel** – it is an expensive hotel – not something else.

**Check Your Progress**

1. Define stress.
2. What are content words?

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## 9.3 INTONATION

When we speak we tend to vary our tone of speech. We do not speak using a monotone for the simple reason we cannot consider speech as consisting of mere combination of phonemes occurring simultaneously getting articulated. You have already learnt how speech sounds to behave at the segment level. Now, you will learn how they behave in connected speech and also at the suprasegmental level. At the supra segmental level, one aspect of it is the use of 'stress' at the word level and sentence level which has been discussed in the earlier sections. Stress at the word level is different from stress at the sentence level. Stress at the word level is to give importance to a particular syllable or giving prominence to a particular syllable by going extra breath force while uttering the syllable. While stress at the sentence level is giving importance to a particular word in an utterance, for example:

'The 'CAT' chased the mouse (To refer to the animal that chased the cat)

The cat 'CHASED' the mouse (to refer to what the cat did. The eat did not kill the rat)

The cat chased the 'MOUSE' (to refer to the fact that the cat chased only the mouse and not anything else.)

Intonation is yet another aspect of speech that functions at the supra segmental level. The term intonation refers to the rise or fall of the pitch of voice. The term intonation also refers to the tone with which one makes an utterance. When speaking, people generally raise or lower the pitch of voice. They also give some syllables in their utterance a great degree of loudness and change them speech rhythm each and every utterance that one makes will have a number of tone–groups. Each tone group represents units of information. This is to say that intonation has the function of dividing the tone groups. Viewed phonetically each tone group consists of a series of rises and falls in the pitch of the voice. Intonation does not happen at random but has definite patterns. The tone in which one utters a statement will be different from the tone in which one utters a question. The different patterns can be analyzed according to their structure and function. Intonation is used to carry information over and above that which is expressed by the words in the sentence.

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### Intonation patterns

The term intonation patterns refer to patterns in the spoken form of a language, which one usually expressed by variations in pitch soundness, syllable length and sometimes speech rhythm. As noted earlier, intonation patterns may:

- Have grammatical functions

  For example, they may show that an utterance is a question and not a statement.

  Really? Ready?

- Give additional information to that given by the words of an utterance.

  For example, I'got the — it was —— whether. I would accept

- Indicate the speaker's attitude to the matter discussed or to the listener

  For example, But I told you

Intonation patterns often differ between languages or even between varieties of the same language, for example, between Australian English and American English. In some communities, there is a difference in the intonation patterns of different age groups or gender.

### Rules for intonation

There are four different types of intonations. They are:

- The falling-intonation
- The rising-intonation
- The rise–fall intonation
- The fall-rise intonation

Intonation is undercoated by the marks shown in the brackets. We use the falling intonation in the following situations and contexts:

- Statements, for example, 'I am a' student in çlass' 10
- Wh-Question asked without any sense of cordiality, for example, 'Where are you going?'
- Exclamations, for example, 'What a beautiful flower', 'A nice dress indeed!', etc.
- Imperative–commands, introductions, directions and orders
  - 'Go' and 'get' me 'something to 'eat'
  - 'Ópen the door'
  - 'Post the Letter'

- Question tags which we use to get confirmation of a statement made. For example:
  - o You are visiting them tomorrow, aren't you?
  - o She has passed the exam, hasn't she?

  Rising Intonation is used in the following contexts:
- Asking yes-no questions, for example, Did you meet him?
- Making—requests, for example,
  - o Pass the salt, please
  - o Would you lend me your car?
- Incomplete utterances, for example,
  - o One Two Three
  - o January, February, March ——
  - o When I went to his school, I ——
  - o as the teacher entered the class
- Wh – questions asked with a sense of cordiality, for example, 'Where are you going My dear?'
- Question tags used for clarification for which we seek an answer, for example,
  - o 'He met you, didn't he?'
  - o We are playing the make tomorrow aren't we?

**The Concept of Nucleus (Types of Nucleus: End-Placed and Contrastive)**

Every tone-group has a nucleus which is the most prominent part and it is a heavily stressed syllable in a tone-group. In a tone group with contrastive or emphatic meaning stress falls on the primary stressed syllable of the lexical word. For example: Let us consider the utterance 'no',

If said with a Fall: No (a matter of fact statement)

If said with a Rise: No (is a question)

If said with a Fall-Rise: No (expressing uncertainty)

If said with a Rise–Fall: No (emphatic scolding)

**Tail**

Any syllable in a tone group coming after the nucleus is called the tail. The tail on these syllables continues the tone of the nucleus. So if the nucleus has a rising or a falling rising pitch then the tail will be rising and it will be falling if the nucleus is falling or rising falling.

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### Head

The part of the tone group coming directly before the nucleus is called the head. This extends from the primarily stressed syllable on the first lexica word in the tone group up to the nucleus.

### Pre-head

Any syllable or syllables coming before the head are called the pre-head. They will be the part of the lexical words or grammatical words and will be relating unstressed. The pre head may normally consists of high level tones or of low level tones. For example:

He does not know how to say it. (matter of fact statement)

He does not know how to say it. (a mocking tone)

### Tonic Accent: Pre-tonic and Post-tonic Accent

Tonic accent means the emphasis produced by change to a syllable, particularly a rise in pitch, rather than a rise in stress. Sometimes known as pitch accent, it is a language with word-accents—that is, where one syllable in a word or morpheme is more pronounced than the others, but the accentuated syllable is indicated by a contrasting pitch (linguistic tone) rather than by loudness, as in a stress-accented pitch. Pitch-accent is also in contrast to entirely tonal languages such as Regular Chinese, in which each syllable may have an individual tone. Languages which have been identified as pitch-accent languages include most Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Baltic, Ancient Greek, Vedic Sanskrit, Turkish, Japanese, Norwegian, Swedish, Western Basque, Yaqui, some Korean, and Shanghainese dialects.

### Pre-tonic and post-tonic accent

As already discussed, in every word which consists of more than one syllable one of those syllables is stressed. It's a stressed syllable. (for example, capital, ñòîëèöà). The tones (vowel sounds) which are located before this stressed syllable are pre-tonic (for example, 'I' in inspection, 'î' in ñòîëèöà). Those located after the stressed syllable are post-tonic, for example, capital, ñòîëèöà, etc.

### 9.3.1 Intonational Functions

Intonational choices made by speakers carry linguistic information and perform a variety of functions. Though researchers of intonation suggest various functions of Intonation, yet the common practice is to take four functions of intonation as a general practice:

- Grammatical function
- Attitudinal
- Accentual
- Informational/Discourse

**Grammatical intonation**

Grammatical intonation helps to identify the grammatical structure in speech, which is similar to the role punctuation performs in writing. Grammatical intonation also helps us in identifying clause and sentence units and contrasts questions/statements. According to Halliday, grammatical intonation relates to grammatical mood (question/statement, etc.) as well as to modality (possibility, validity, etc.). Roach believed that 'grammatical intonation helps language speakers and learners to recognize the grammar and syntactic structures, e.g. boundaries between phrases, clauses, and sentences. It also facilitates our knowledge of the differences between questions and statements as well as the intricacies of grammatical subordination'.

**Attitudinal intonation**

We use intonation as a chief means of expressing our attitude, emotions and thoughts. The researchers of Intonation points out those patterns with a narrow range of frequency variations are the most unpleasant to our ears, while smooth changes in one direction are generally less pleasant. They also point out differences in the judgments according to the grammatical category of the sentence; statements could be pleasant with either a final rise or fall while questions and commands were pleasant only with a final rise (Fry, 1974). Citing the descriptions from 'Nine ways of saying yes' by Crystal and Allen, it can be pointed out that the problems of the attitudinal meaning of tone are as follows:

- The imprecision of the descriptions. It is difficult to be precise about emotional nuances. For example it is difficult to say what the difference is between the meaning 'detached, unemotional statement of fact' and 'routine, uncommitted comment; detached and unexcited.'
- It results in the form where any tone can mean anything, depending on the context. This is a serious problem for a systematic description.
- Meaning of an intonation choice may depend on associated gestures or facial expressions.

In fact, almost any emotion can be accompanied by any tone. Without lexical or contextual information or other vocal clues, it becomes almost impossible to reliably label a tone as displaying a particular attitude or emotion. Generally speaking, discussions of the function of intonation in English often centre on the relation between intonation and attitudes. In fact, the main function of intonation is seen by many phonologists as conveying attitudes. Many other factors, such as loudness, quality of voice, speed of delivery, facial and bodily gestures, etc., also contribute significantly to the conveying of attitude. The result of all this is that we cannot really say anything constructive about intonation and attitude.

**Accentual intonation**

The word accentuation refers to accent. Some writers attach stress to the word accent. When it is said that intonation has an accentual role, it means that intonation

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somewhat defines the location of stress. The most common position for tonic syllable placement is the last lexical word (nouns, adjectives, words, adverbs) and not the functional words. However any word may become the bearer of tonic syllable for contrastive purposes. Take, for example:

- She was wearing a cotton **dress** (Normal placement)

  She was not wearing a **cotton** dress. She was wearing a **silk** dress. (Contrastive purpose placement)
- I want to know where he is **travelling** to

  I don't want to know where he is travelling **to**. I want to know where he is travelling **from**

Similarly the tonic stress may be put in other places for the purpose of emphasis, for example:

- The movie was very **boring**

  The movie was **very** boring
- You shouldn't talk so **loudly**

  You **shouldn't** talk so loudly

  Intonation is used to clear out the ambiguities, for example:

  I have plans to **leave** (I am planning to leave)

  I have **plans** to leave (I have some plans/diagrams/drawings that I have to leave)

**Discourse or Informational Intonation**

Discourse or Information entails in it the kind of response to be expected. In normal daily communication, intonation is used at of syntax (sentence). As people communicate primarily through language, therefore intonation should be studied at discourse level. Recent phonological research defines intonation as a speaker's way of organizing and relating meanings throughout the discourse. More significantly, this approach interprets various meanings based on the choices of the speaker. Almost all intonational choices are tied to the context in which they occur. In contrast to the linguistic universality of grammar, it is impossible in the discourse approach to isolate a speech from its context and, hence, make reasonable generalizations about intonational meaning. We can say that discourse intonation provides a tool for the four options associated with tone units: prominence, tone, key, and termination; each of which adds a different type of information.

- Prominence is a syllable on which there is a major pitch movement.
- Tone pitch movements are distinguished by their particular direction: falling, rising, fall-rise, rise-fall.
- Key is the relative pitch level chosen by speakers for each tone unit. Three choices are proposed: low, middle, and high.

- Termination is a low, middle, or high pitch level choice made by speakers at the beginning or end of a tone unit.

Gradually there is a shift in focus towards adopting the discourse view of intonation, particularly in teaching new language learners. Hewings (1995) is of the view that, Discourse view of Intonation tends to view speech as 'a purpose-driven activity where speakers and hearers cooperate to reach the desired goal of shared understanding. It also refers to the common ground that exists between speaker and hearer as the area in which their world views converge'. Although discourse intonation has some difficulties for pedagogical application and its adapted and simplified version for teaching purposes, Discourse Intonation seems to be most viable and convincing of all intonational functions available at the moment. Moreover, its well-developed model provides us with a strong systematic framework within which teachers and students can study intonation.

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**Check Your Progress**

3. What are intonation patterns?
4. What are the four types of intonation?
5. Define tonic accent.

## 9.4 ELISION AND ASSIMILATION

When we speak, the sounds are not always clearly discernable as we speak in a fast manner leading to words and sounds getting lost and mixed up with each other. In other words, it can be said that with minimal vocal movement, we try to utter the words and sentences leading to many changes in the phonemic structure of language in the process of speaking. That is why when we listen to American or British English, we often tend to think that their pronunciation is very different from us. What the American English often does is to use Elision and Assimilation while speaking leading to many non-native English speakers finding it difficult to follow American English, though they are conversant with written English.

### Elision

Elision is the loss of a phoneme, most commonly the last phoneme of a word, and most commonly the /t/ and /d/ sounds. Have a look at these examples:

- left back
- stand by
- looked back
- I must go

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In each case the last phoneme of the first word is elided (lost). In simple terms, the reason is that the time and effort required to change the mouth position from the /t/ to the /b/ sound (as in the first example) or the /t/ to the /g/ sound (as in the last example) is too much and thus it leads to elision while speaking.

**Assimilation**

Assimilation occurs when a phoneme (sound) in one word causes a change in a sound in a neighbouring word. For example, try saying the following pairs of words:

- in Bath
- last year
- Hyde Park

You'll notice that the last sound of the first word changes in each case. The /n/ sound becomes /m/, /t/ becomes /tʃ/ and /d/ becomes /b/.

### 9.4.1 Juncture

Juncture refers to breaks or pauses in speech that indicate words or other grammatical units. Phonetic boundaries used to demarcate words or other grammatical units are known as junctures. There are several phrases in English that are distinguishable in this way: "that stuff"/ "that's tough"; "an aim"/ "a name". In the first case, for example, the {s} of "stuff" is stronger, and the {t} of tough is aspirated. (Crystal, 164) Juncture is phonemic. That is it changes the meaning, as in the following example: "I scream" and "ice cream." (Herndon, 85)

**Check Your Progress**

6. Define elision.
7. What is assimilation?

## 9.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Stress is the relative degree of force with which a syllable is uttered.
2. Content words are those that are essential for conveying a message. These are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and demonstratives.
3. The term intonation patterns refer to patterns in the spoken form of a language, which one usually expressed by variations in pitch soundness, syllable length and sometimes speech rhythm.
4. There are four different types of intonations. They are:
   o The falling-intonation

o The rising-intonation

o The rise–fall intonation

o The fall-rise intonation

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5. Tonic accent means the emphasis produced by change to a syllable, particularly a rise in pitch, rather than a rise in stress.
6. Elision is the loss of a phoneme, most commonly the last phoneme of a word, and most commonly the /t/ and /d/ sounds.
7. Assimilation occurs when a phoneme (sound) in one word causes a change in a sound in a neighbouring word.

## 9.6 SUMMARY

- Each syllable has an obligatory vowel sound and one, two or more consonantal sounds. These syllables make up a word. When there is merely one syllable, the stress is obviously on that particular syllable. But when there is more than one syllable in a word, then one syllable gets more stress than the other.
- Stress is the relative degree of force with which a syllable is uttered. Factors affecting word stress are loudness, pitch change, quality of the vowel, and quantity or length of the syllable.
- Normally, 'content words' are stressed. Content words are those that are essential for conveying a message. These are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and demonstratives. Normally, structural words are not stressed. These are words like conjunctions auxiliaries grammatical units such as preparations, articles, and when they don't require an emphasis.
- The stress on words in a sentence depends on the context and the speaker's intention. Stress in a sentence also varies according to what the speaker wants to say.
- The term intonation refers to the rise or fall of the pitch of voice. The term intonation also refers to the tone with which one makes an utterance. The term intonation patterns refer to patterns in the spoken form of a language, which one usually expressed by variations in pitch soundness, syllable length and sometimes speech rhythm.
- There are four different types of intonations. They are:
  - o The falling-intonation
  - o The rising-intonation
  - o The rise–fall intonation
  - o The fall-rise intonation

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- Every tone-group has a nucleus which is the most prominent part and it is a heavily stressed syllable in a tone-group. In a tone group with contrastive or emphatic meaning stress falls on the primary stressed syllable of the lexical word.
- Any syllable in a tone group coming after the nucleus is called the tail. The part of the tone group coming directly before the nucleus is called the head. Any syllable or syllables coming before the head are called the pre-head.
- Tonic accent means the emphasis produced by change to a syllable, particularly a rise in pitch, rather than a rise in stress.
- Intonational choices made by speakers carry linguistic information and perform a variety of functions. These functions can be grammatical, attitudinal, accentual or informational.
- Grammatical intonation helps to identify the grammatical structure in speech, which is similar to the role punctuation performs in writing. Grammatical intonation also helps us in identifying clause and sentence units and contrasts questions/statements.
- Generally speaking, discussions of the function of intonation in English often centre on the relation between intonation and attitudes. In fact, the main function of intonation is seen by many phonologists as conveying attitudes. Many other factors, such as loudness, quality of voice, speed of delivery, facial and bodily gestures, etc., also contribute significantly to the conveying of attitude.
- When it is said that intonation has an accentual role, it means that intonation somewhat defines the location of stress.
- Discourse intonation provides a tool for the four options associated with tone units: prominence, tone, key, and termination; each of which adds a different type of information.
- Assimilation occurs when a phoneme (sound) in one word causes a change in a sound in a neighbouring word.
- Elision is the loss of a phoneme, most commonly the last phoneme of a word, and most commonly the /t/ and /d/ sounds.
- Juncture refers to breaks or pauses in speech that indicate words or other grammatical units. Phonetic boundaries used to demarcate words or other grammatical units are known as junctures.

## 9.7 KEY WORDS

- **Stress:** It is the relative degree of force with which a syllable is uttered.
- **Intonation:** The term refers to the rise or fall of the pitch of voice. It also refers to the tone with which one makes an utterance.

- **Elision**: It is the loss of a phoneme, most commonly the last phoneme of a word, and most commonly the /t/ and /d/ sounds.
- **Juncture**: It refers to breaks or pauses in speech that indicate words or other grammatical units. Phonetic boundaries used to demarcate words or other grammatical units are known as junctures.

NOTES

## 9.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. What are the factors affecting word stress?
2. Differentiate between stress and intonation.
3. What do you mean by pre-tonic and post-tonic accent?
4. Write a short note on discourse intonation.
5. Define juncture.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the rules for placement of primary stress on words.
2. Analyse the rules for intonation in English.
3. Examine the main functions of intonation.

## 9.9 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

Jindal, D.V. and Pushpinder Syal. 2007. *An Introduction to Linguistics: Language, Grammar and Semantics.* New Delhi: PHI Learning.

Baugh, A.C. and Thomas Cable. 1993. *A History of the English Language.* New Delhi: Taylor and Francis.

NOTES

# UNIT 10 PRONUNCIATION AND TRANSCRIPTION

**Structure**



## 10.0 INTRODUCTION

Received Pronunciation (R.P.), or the Queen's/King's English or Oxford English, is the accent that is traditionally regarded as the standard for British English. On the other hand, General Indian English refers to a variety of English that incorporates all the different varieties of Indian English together. There are pronounced differences between British R.P. and the General Indian English, which will be discussed in the unit. Furthermore, the differences between phonetic transcriptions and phonemic transcriptions will also be described.

## 10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand Received Pronunciation and General Indian English
- Explain the differences between British R.P. and General Indian English
- Discuss in detail Phonetic Transcription and Phonemic Transcription

## 10.2 RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION

Received pronunciation (RP) is often referred to as the Queen's or King's English, Oxford English, or BBC English. It is the accent of supposed Standard English in

England. The term 'received pronunciation' is credited to Daniel Jones after his comment in 1917—'In what follows I call it Received Pronunciation (abbreviation RP), for want of a better term.' It was used earlier by Alexander Ellis in 1869 and Peter DuPonceau in 1818. RP is defined often as the standard accent of English as spoken in the south of England. There is nothing intrinsic about RP that marks it as superior to any other variety. The standard language, and the RP is the accent of those who have the power, money and influence.

### RP Phonology

### Consonants

When consonants appear in pairs, the fortis consonants (i.e., aspirated or voiceless) appear on the left and lenis consonants (i.e., lightly voiced or voiced) appear on the right.

***Table 10.1*** *Consonant Phonemes of Received Pronunciation*

| Consonant Phonemes of Received Pronunciation | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Bilabial** | **Labio-dental** | **Dental** | **Alveolar** | **Post-alveolar** | **Palatal** | **Velar** | **Glottal** |
| **Nasal** | m | | | N | | | ŋ | |
| **Plosive** | p b | | | t d | | | k g | |
| **Affricate** | | | | | ʧ dʒ | | | |
| **Fricative** | | f v | θ ð[2] | s z | ʃ ʒ | | | h[3] |
| **Approximant** | | | | ɹ[1, 4] | | j | w | |
| **Lateral** | | | | l[1, 5] | | | | |

1. Nasals and liquids may be syllabic in unstressed syllables.
2. /ð/ is more often a weak dental plosive; the sequence /nð/ is often realized as [n̪n̪].
3. /h/ becomes [ɦ] between voiced sounds.
4. /ɹ/ is postalveolar unless devoicing results in a voiceless fricative articulation
5. /l/ is velarised in the syllable coda.

Unless preceded by /s/, fortis plosives (/p/, /t/, and /k/) are aspirated before stressed vowels; when a sonorant /l/, /ɹ/, /w/, or /j/ follows, this aspiration is indicated by partial devoicing of the sonorant.

Syllable finals /p/, /t/, /tʃ/, and /k/ are either preceded by a glottal stop or, in the case of /t/, fully replaced by a glottal stop, especially before a syllabic nasal (*bitten*). The glottal stop may be realized as creaky voice; thus a true phonetic transcription of *attempt* [əˈtʰemʔt] would be [əˈtʰemm̰t].

NOTES

## Vowels

***Table 10.2*** *Front, Central and Back Monophthongs*

| Monophthongs | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Front | | Central | | Back | |
| | long | short | long | short | long | short |
| Close | iː | ɪ | | | uː | ʊ |
| Mid | | e̠* | ɜː | ə | ɔː | |
| Open | | æ | | ʌ | ɑː | ɒ |

Examples of short vowels: /ɪ/ in ***kit***, ***mi****rror* and *rabb****i****t*, /ʊ/ in ***put***, /**e**/ in *dr****e****ss* and *m****e****rry*, /ʌ/ in *str****u****t* and ***cu****rry*, /æ/ in *tr****a****p* and *m****a****rry*, /ɒ/ in ***lot*** and ***o****range*, /ə/ in ***a****go* and *sof****a***.

Examples of long vowels: /iː/ in *fl****ee****ce*, /uː/ in *g****oo****se*, /ɜː/ in *n****ur****se* and *f****ur****ry*, /ɔː/ in *n****or****th*, *f****or****ce* and *th****ough****t*, /ɑː/ in *f****a****ther* and *st****ar****t*.

RP's long vowels are slightly diphthongized. The high vowels, /iː/ and /uː/, are often narrowly transcribed in phonetic literature as diphthongs [ɪ **i**] and [ʊ u].

'Long' and 'short' are relative to each other. Owing to the phonological process affecting vowel length, short vowels in one context can be longer than long vowels in another context. For example, a long vowel followed by a fortis consonant sound (/p/, /k/, /s/, etc.) is shorter; *reed* is thus pronounced [ɹiːd̥] while *heat* is [hiʔt].

Conversely, the short vowel /æ/ becomes longer if it is followed by a lenis consonant. Thus, bat is pronounced [b̥æʔt] and bad is [b̥æːd̥]. In natural speech, the plosives /t/ and /d/ may be unreleased utterance-finally, thus distinction between these words would rest mostly on vowel length.

In addition to such lengthy distinctions, unstressed vowels are both shorter and more centralized than stressed ones. When unstressed syllables occur before vowels and in final position, the contrasts between long and short high vowels are neutralized, short [i] and [u] occur (e.g. *happy* ['hæpi], throughout [θɹu'aʊʔt]). The neutralization is common throughout many English dialects. However, the phonetic realization of [i] rather than [ɪ] (a phenomenon called happy tensing) is not universal.

*Table 10.3* Examples of Diphthong

| Diphthong | Example | |
|---|---|---|
| **Closing** | | |
| /eɪ/ | /beɪ/ | bay |
| /aɪ/ | /baɪ/ | buy |
| /ɔɪ/ | /bɔɪ/ | boy |
| /əʊ/ | /bəʊ/ | beau |
| /aʊ/ | /baʊ/ | bough |
| **Centring** | | |
| /ɪə/ | /bɪə/ | beer |
| /eə/ | /beə/ | bear |
| /ʊə/ | /bʊə/ | boor |

Before World War II, /ɔə/ appeared in words like 'door' but this has largely merged with /ɔː/. 'Poor' traditionally had /ʊə/ and is still listed with only this pronunciation by the OED, but a realization with /ɔː/ has become more common, as in poor–pour merger. In the closing diphthongs, the glide is often so small as to be undetectable so that 'day' and 'dare' can be narrowly transcribed as [d̥e̞ː] and [d̥ɛː] respectively.

RP also possesses the triphthongs /aɪə/ as in 'ire' and /aʊə/ as in 'hour'. Different possible realizations of these diphthongs are indicated in the following table: furthermore, the difference between /aʊə/, /aɪə/, and /ɑː/ may be neutralized with both realized as [ɑː] or [äː].

*Table 10.4* Uses of Triphthongs

| Triphthongs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **As two syllables** | **Triphthong** | **Loss of mid-element** | **Further simplified as** |
| [aɪ.ə] | [aɪə] | [aːə] | [aː] |
| [ɑʊ.ə] | [ɑʊə] | [ɑːə] | [ɑː] |

Not all reference sources use the same system of transcription. In particular:

- /æ/ as in *trap* is also written /a/.
- /e/ as in *dress* is also written /ɛ/.

- /ɜː/ as in *nurse* is also written /əː/.
- /aɪ/ as in *price* is also written /ʌɪ/.
- /aʊ/ as in *mouse* is also written /ɑʊ/.
- /eə/ as in *square* is also written /ɛə/, and is also sometimes treated as a long monophthong /ɛː/.

NOTES

**Check Your Progress**

1. What is Received Pronunciation also known as?
2. Who is credited with coining the term 'received pronunciation'?
3. Give examples of long vowels.
4. Give an example of RP triphthong.

## 10.3 GENERAL INDIAN ENGLISH

A lot of varieties of English exists in different parts of the world. In India, too the language is influenced by the regional aspects such as people belonging to Southern states will have a different accent as compared to people belonging to the Northern states. For example, in Bengali language as we have already discussed, /a: / and other similar sounds are replaced by / T /. So they will pronounce 'Sanjay' and 'Basu' as 'Sonjoy' and 'Bosu' respectively. However, the different types of varieties merge into a single entity which is referred to as General Indian English (GIE). It is defined as a variety that consists of all the varieties Indian English together, however, certain regional features are ignored in this case.

In the exiting times, it is considered as one of the most influential variety that is shared among educated users of the language. In the year 1972, the *Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages* (CIEFL) recognized this system. It is thus, referred as a variety that is spoken by the educated Indians. It is not bounded by the regional constraints and is a mixture of both descriptive and prescriptive approaches of language. It is descriptive as it describes the phonological features of a variety of English and it is prescriptive as it is prescribed by the EFLU to Indian speakers of English. Therefore, this model assist them to get rid of their regional accent such as that of Punjabi English, Urdu English, Telugu English, Oriya English, Bengali English, Kannada English and Malayalam English and helps them to acquire the means to pronounce in a better way. In GIE, there is a tendency to include equated stops with the unaspirated phonemes as compared to the aspirated phonemes of the local languages. The closure of the words too seemed smoother

and shorter and even the release was not accompanied by a loud burst as compared to the Received Pronunciation.

**NOTES**

### Differences between the Vowel Systems of British R.P. (Received Pronunciation) and General Indian English (GIE)

The differences between the vowel systems of the British Received Pronunciation and General Indian English are as follows:

- Indian English has only one phoneme /Y/ as compared to R.P. /Y/, /Œ/ and /3:/
- Indian English has monophthongs / e / and / o: / in place of R.P. diphthongs / eI / and/ Yu /
- Indian English has one phoneme / T / corresponding to R.P. / T / and /T:/
- In British R.P. / p,t,k, / at the beginning of accented syllables are aspirated, that is, there is a strong puff of breath after the release of the plosive before the next vowel begins, e.g., [k°], [p°], [t°]. This aspiration is absent in Indian English, and lack of aspiration is a frequent cause of Indian English being unintelligible to native speakers. It is desirable to have some aspiration in /p,t,k/ when they occur initially in accented syllables. In R.P. the release of final plosives is sometimes almost inaudible.
- The qualities of some of the Indian English vowels are different from those in R.P.
- The distribution of vowels in Indian English sometimes differs from that in R.P. For example, in R.P. generally a weak vowel - / Y /, / i / or / u / is used in an unaccented syllable. This is not the case in General Indian English, where the tendency is to use the-vowel indicated by the spelling.
- The sound / p / is represented by the letter p. In cupboard, and receipt, /p/ is silent. / b / is represented by the letter b. In words like comb, limb, thumb and debt, b is silent. In Indian English / p / is unaspirated in all positions. It is necessary to aspirate it at the beginning of accented syllables when talking to native English speakers, because lack of aspiration in this position is likely to cause confusion between pairs like pack and back.
- In British R.P., /k/is aspirated at the beginning of accented syllables as in cool, clean but is unaspirated after /s/, as in school scold, scorn, and in unaccented positions as in collect, packing, equal. /g / is never aspirated in English. In General Indian English, / k / is unaspirated in all positions. It is necessary to aspirate it at the beginning of accented syllables when talking to native English speakers otherwise it will create confusion in the sounds like cold and gold, cot and got.

NOTES

- Dental plosives /t°/ and /d/ are used in Indian English instead of the fricatives / è/, / ð/ in words like thank and then. For international intelligibility it is necessary to use the fricative sounds. In General Indian English / t / and / d / are often retro-flex, that is, articulated by the tip of the tongue curled back and making a contact with the front of the hard palate. In Indian English / t / is unaspirated in all positions. It is necessary to aspirate it at the beginning of accented syllables when talking to native English speakers, because lack of aspiration is likely to cause confusion between pairs like train and drain.
- In British R.P. / t*ƒ*/, /d3 are always released even when followed by another plosive or affricate, as in watch chain (t*ƒ* + t*ƒ* ), orange juice (d3 + d3). In General Indian English the first affricate is not released in such contexts.
- / n / can be syllabic in British R.P. as in cotton/ 'kotn / In General Indian English a syllabic / n / is sometimes replaced by / Yn / as in button / 'b Y t/ Yn /
- In British R.P. two varieties of /l / are used; a clear variety / I /, for which the front of the tongue is also raised towards the hard palate, is used before vowels and /j/. A dark variety for which the back of the tongue is raised towards the soft palate, is used in other positions. However, in case of Indian English it has only a clear variety.
- In General Indian English, / w / is generally replaced by /v /.
- A voiced fricative / r / is used after / d / as in dry, draw. A voiceless fricative / r / is used after accented / p,t,k / as in pray, try, cream. An alveolar flap is also used between two vowels as in very and after / è/ as in three. In Indian English / r / is often retained in all positions. Some speakers use the flapped variety in most positions.

## 10.4 TRANSCRIPTION

Transcription is a systematic representation of language in written form. The source can be both written or spoken form of a language. The IPA symbols are used for transcription in English.

Look at the list of IPA symbols given in the table and use it to transcribe words.

NOTES

***Table 10.5*** *IPA Symbols*

vowels

| IPA | examples |
|---|---|
| ʌ | cup, luck |
| a: | arm, father |
| æ | cat, black |
| ə | away, cinema |
| e | met, bed |
| ɜ: | turn, learn |
| ɪ | hit, sitting |
| i: | see, heat |
| ɒ | hot, rock |
| ɔ: | call, four |
| ʊ | put, could |
| u: | blue, food |
| aɪ | five, eye |
| aʊ | now, out |
| əʊ | go, home |
| eə | where, air |
| eɪ | say, eight |
| ɪə | near, here |
| ɔɪ | boy, join |
| ʊə | pure, tourist |

consonants

| IPA | examples |
|---|---|
| b | bad, lab |
| d | did, lady |
| f | find, if |
| g | give, flag |
| h | how, hello |
| j | yes, yellow |
| k | cat, back |
| l | leg, little |
| m | man, lemon |
| n | no, ten |
| ŋ | sing, finger |
| p | pet, map |
| r | red, try |
| s | sun, miss |
| ʃ | she, crash |
| t | tea, getting |
| tʃ | check, church |
| θ | think, both |
| ð | this, mother |
| v | voice, five |
| w | wet, window |
| z | zoo, lazy |
| ʒ | pleasure, vision |
| dʒ | just, large |

**Check Your Progress**

5. Define General Indian English (GIE).
6. What is transcription?

## 10.5 PHONETIC AND PHONEMIC TRANSCRIPTION

Let us first discuss phonetic transcription.

### Phonetic Transcription

In phonetic transcription, a larger set of symbols is used to capture more phonetic details regarding the tangible production of the utterance.

There are two types of phonetic transcription: (i) broad phonetic transcription and (ii) narrow phonetic transcription.

NOTES

### Broad Phonetic Transcription

In broad phonetic transcription of speech, it is not attempted to record the huge number of contextual or idiosyncratic variations in pronunciation that take place in normal speech. Further, it attempts to describe the individual variations occurring among the speakers of a dialect or language.

The objective of a broad transcription is to record the phonemes used by a speaker rather than the real spoken variants of those phonemes that get produced when a speaker speaks a word.

We can say that a 'broad phonetic transcription' classifies speech sounds into broad classes of actually spoken sounds. On the other hand, a 'phonemic' transcription classifies speech sounds in terms of the phonemes which a speaker is intending to communicate.

However, in practice the expressions 'broad phonetic' and 'phonemic' transcriptions are usually used interchangeably and mean the transcription of phonemes.

### Narrow Phonetic Transcription

A narrow phonetic transcription comprises phonetic details that can usually be predicted by the 'rules'. There are some key 'rules' to convert a broad transcription to a narrow transcription. It should be remembered that any narrow phonetic transcription should be enclosed in [ ] brackets.

### 'Rules' for Narrow Transcription

The guidelines to narrow transcription are not really 'rules' but more of predictions, i.e., the uncritical application of such guidelines does not always result in a perfect narrow transcription. In fact, the speakers are at freedom to change their pronunciations in various manners.

Speakers vary from each other in their pronunciation and the same speaker might change the pronunciation of the same word in various contexts.

Therefore, the guidelines for transcription are probabilistic in nature because they suggest the most expected pronunciations.

### Phonemic Transcription

In phonemic transcription, a restricted set of symbols is used to capture the meaningful sound contrasts of a language. For example,

**'cat'** vs **'tat'**

/kæt/ vs / tæt/

### Symbols for Phonemic Transcription

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is the most comprehensively accepted system of symbols. In normal practice, this alphabet represents both phonemes and allophones even though it is defined in terms of the actual speech sounds.

While the linguists develop a phonemic description of a language or dialect, they generally select the most common or comprehensively distributed allophone of each phoneme as the characteristic allophone of that phoneme and use its phonetic symbol to represent the phoneme as a whole.

Once a symbol is used to represent an actual sound (allophone), it possesses a totally different meaning to the same symbol if used to represent a phoneme. Due to this, the transcriptions are always enclosed in /…/ when we indicate phonemes and in [...] when we mean the actually produced sounds.

**NOTES**

**Do you know?**

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is the oldest representative organization for phoneticians. It was established in 1886 in Paris. The aim of the IPA is to promote the scientific study of phonetics and the various practical applications of that science. In furtherance of this aim, the IPA provides the academic community world-wide with a notational standard for the phonetic representation of all languages.

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (2005)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

| | LABIAL | | CORONAL | | | | DORSAL | | | RADICAL | | LARYNGEAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bilabial | Labio-dental | Dental | Alveolar | Palato-alveolar | Retroflex | Palatal | Velar | Uvular | Pharyngeal | Epi-glottal | Glottal |
| Nasal | m | ɱ | | n | | ɳ | ɲ | ŋ | ɴ | | | |
| Plosive | p b | ȹ ȸ | | t d | | ʈ ɖ | c ɟ | k ɡ | q ɢ | | ʡ | ʔ |
| Fricative | ɸ β | f v | θ ð | s z | ʃ ʒ | ʂ ʐ | ç ʝ | x ɣ | χ ʁ | ħ ʕ | ʜ ʢ | h ɦ |
| Approximant | | ʋ | | ɹ | | ɻ | j | ɰ | | | | |
| Trill | ʙ | | | r | | | | | ʀ | | я | |
| Tap, Flap | | ⱱ | | ɾ | | ɽ | | | | | | |
| Lateral fricative | | | | ɬ ɮ | | ꞎ | 𝼆 | 𝼄 | | | | |
| Lateral approximant | | | | l | | ɭ | ʎ | ʟ | | | | |
| Lateral flap | | | | ɺ | | 𝼈 | | | | | | |

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a modally voiced consonant, except for murmured ɦ. Shaded areas denote articulations judged to be impossible. Light grey letters are unofficial extensions of the IPA.

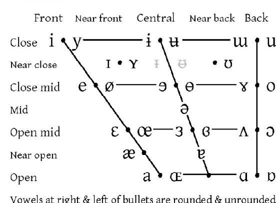
CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

| Anterior click releases (require posterior stops) | Voiced implosives | Ejectives |
|---|---|---|
| ʘ Bilabial fricated | ɓ Bilabial | ʼ *Examples:* |
| ǀ Laminal alveolar fricated ("dental") | ɗ Dental or alveolar | pʼ Bilabial |
| ǃ Apical (post)alveolar abrupt ("retroflex") | ʄ Palatal | tʼ Dental or alveolar |
| ǂ Laminal postalveolar abrupt ("palatal") | ɠ Velar | kʼ Velar |
| ǁ Lateral alveolar fricated ("lateral") | ʛ Uvular | sʼ Alveolar fricative |

CONSONANTS (CO-ARTICULATED)

ʍ Voiceless labialized velar approximant
w Voiced labialized velar approximant
ɥ Voiced labialized palatal approximant
ɕ Voiceless palatalized postalveolar (alveolo-palatal) fricative
ʑ Voiced palatalized postalveolar (alveolo palatal) fricative
ɧ Simultaneous *x* and ʃ (disputed)
k͡p t͜s Affricates and double articulations may be joined by a tie bar

VOWELS



Vowels at right & left of bullets are rounded & unrounded.

SUPRASEGMENTALS

ˈ Primary stress
ˌ Secondary stress
ː Long
e Short
. Syllable break
ˈˈ Extra stress
[ˌfoʊnəˈtɪʃən]
eˑ Half-long
ĕ Extra-short
‿ Linking (no break)

INTONATION

| Minor (foot) break
‖ Major (intonation) break
↗ Global rise
↘ Global fall

TONE

*Level tones*

e̋ ˥ Top
é ˦ High
ē ˧ Mid
è ˨ Low
ȅ ˩ Bottom

*Tone terracing*

ꜛ Upstep
ꜜ Downstep

*Contour-tone examples:*

ě ˩˥ Rising
ê ˥˩ Falling
e᷄ ˧˥ High rising
e᷅ ˩˧ Low rising
e᷇ ˥˧ High falling
e᷆ ˧˩ Low falling
e᷈ ˧˦˧ Peaking
e᷉ ˧˨˧ Dipping

DIACRITICS Diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, as ŋ̊. Other IPA symbols may appear as diacritics to represent phonetic detail: tˢ (fricative release), bʱ (breathy voice), ˀa (glottal onset), ᵊ (epenthetic schwa), oʷ (diphthongization).

| SYLLABICITY & RELEASES | | PHONATION | | PRIMARY ARTICULATION | | SECONDARY ARTICULATION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| n̩ ɹ̩ | Syllabic | n̥ d̥ | Voiceless or Slack voice | t̪ b̪ | Dental | tʷ dʷ | Labialized | ɔ̹ x̹ | More rounded |
| e̯ ʊ̯ | Non-syllabic | s̬ d̬ | Modal voice or Stiff voice | t̺ d̺ | Apical | tʲ dʲ | Palatalized | ɔ̜ xʷ̜ | Less rounded |
| tʰ ʰt | (Pre)aspirated | n̤ a̤ | Breathy voice | t̻ d̻ | Laminal | tˠ dˠ | Velarized | ẽ z̃ | Nasalized |
| dⁿ | Nasal release | n̰ a̰ | Creaky voice | u̟ t̟ | Advanced | tˤ dˤ | Pharyngealized | ɚ ɝ | Rhoticity |
| dˡ | Lateral release | n͇ a͇ | Strident | i̠ t̠ | Retracted | ɫ z̴ | Velarized or pharyngealized | e̘ o̘ | Advanced tongue root |
| t̚ | No audible release | n̼ d̼ | Linguolabial | ä ÿ | Centralized | ŭ̽ | Mid centralized | e̙ o̙ | Retracted tongue root |
| e̞ β̞ | Lowered (β̞ is a bilabial approximant) | | | e̝ ɹ̝ | Raised (ɹ̝ is a voiced alveolar non-sibilant fricative, r̝ a fricative trill) | | | | |

***Source:*** http://teflworldwiki.com/index.php/The_International_Phonetic_Association

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**An example**

Frustration is a burst hot-water bottle, or loathing every moment of a holiday you're paying a fortune for. It's using the wrong side of the Sellotape, forgetting what you were going to say, or locking yourself out. Frustration is other people parking in front of your garage, or a stranger reading a riveting letter on the bus and turning over before you get to the bottom of the page.

frʌstˈeɪsʃnz ə ˈbɜst hɔtwɔtə ˈbɔ
dḷ ɔ ˈləʊθɪŋ evrɪ ˈmɘʊmṇ ʌv ə ˈh
ɒlədeɪ jʊə ˈpeɪŋ ə ˈfɔtʃṇ fɔ. ɪ
ts ˈjusɪŋ ðə ˈrɔŋ ˈsaɪd ə ðə ˈselət
eɪp ˈfɔgedŋ wʌ djə wə gɔɪŋ tə ˈ
seɪ ɔ ˈlɒkṇ jəself ˈaʊt frʌstˈeɪsʃn
z ʌðə ˈpipḷ ˈpɑkṇ ən ˈfrʌnt əv jə
ˈgæredʒ ɔ rə ˈstreɪndʒə ˈridɪŋ ə
ˈrɪvetŋ ˈlede ʌn ə ˈbʌs ṇ ˈtɜnɪn ɔ
və bəfɔ jə ˈge tə ðə ˈbɔdṃ əv
ðə ˈpeɪdʒ

***Source:*** http://esl.about.com/library/lessons/blphontranscript.htm

**Check Your Progress**

7. What are the two types of phonetic transcriptions?
8. What is the objective of a broad transcription?

## 10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Received Pronunciation (RP) is often referred to as the Queen's or King's English, Oxford English, or BBC English.
2. The term 'received pronunciation' is credited to Daniel Jones after his comment in 1917—'In what follows I call it Received Pronunciation (abbreviation RP), for want of a better term. It was used earlier by Alexander Ellis in 1869 and Peter DuPonceau in 1818.
3. Examples of long vowels are /iĐ/ in fleece, /uĐ/ in goose, /\Đ/ in nurse and furry, /TĐ/ in north, force and thought, /aĐ/ in father and start.
4. Example of RP triphthongs are /ajY/ as in 'ire' and /aŠY/ as in 'hour'.
5. A lot of varieties of English exists in different parts of the world. In India too, the language is influenced by the regional aspects such as people belonging to Southern states will have a different accent as compared to people belonging to the Northern states. The different types of varieties merge into a single entity which is referred to as General Indian English (GIE).

6. Transcription is a systematic representation of language in written form. The source can be both a written or spoken form of a language.
7. There are two types of phonetic transcription: (i) broad phonetic transcription and (ii) narrow phonetic transcription.
8. The objective of a broad transcription is to record the phonemes used by a speaker rather than the real spoken variants of those phonemes that get produced when a speaker speaks a word.

## 10.7 SUMMARY

- Received Pronunciation (RP) is often referred to as the Queen's or King's English, Oxford English, or BBC English. It is the accent of supposed Standard English in England. The term 'received pronunciation' is credited to Daniel Jones after his comment in 1917—'In what follows I call it Received Pronunciation (abbreviation RP), for want of a better term.
- When consonants appear in pairs, the fortis consonants (i.e., aspirated or voiceless) appear on the left and lenis consonants (i.e., lightly voiced or voiced) appear on the right.
- Unless preceded by /s/, fortis plosives (/p/, /t/, and /k/) are aspirated before stressed vowels; when a sonorant /l/, /y/, /w/, or /j/ follows, this aspiration is indicated by partial devoicing of the sonorant.
- Examples of short vowels are /j/ in kit, mirror and rabbit, /Š/ in put, /e/ in dress and merry, /Œ / in strut and curry, /æ/ in trap and marry, /R/ in lot and orange, /Y/ in ago and sofa.
- Examples of long vowels are /iÐ/ in fleece, /uÐ/ in goose, /\Ð/ in nurse and furry, /TÐ/ in north, force and thought, /aÐ/ in father and start.
- Unstressed vowels are both shorter and more centralized than stressed ones. When unstressed syllables occur before vowels and in final position, the contrasts between long and short high vowels are neutralized.
- RP also possesses the triphthongs /ajY/ as in 'ire' and /aŠY/ as in 'hour'. Furthermore, the difference between /aŠY/, /ajY/, and /QÐ/ may be neutralized with both realized as [QÐ] or [äÐ].
- A lot of varieties of English exists in different parts of the world. In India, too the language is influenced by the regional aspects such as people belonging to Southern states will have a different accent as compared to people belonging to the Northern states. The different types of varieties merge into a single entity which is referred to as General Indian English (GIE). It is defined as a variety that consists of all the varieties Indian English together, however, certain regional features are ignored in this case.

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- There are differences between the vowel systems of the British Received Pronunciation and General Indian English. The qualities of some of the Indian English vowels are also different from those in R.P.
- Transcription is a systematic representation of language in written form. The source can be both a written or spoken form of a language. The IPA symbols are used for transcription in English.
- In phonetic transcription, a larger set of symbols is used to capture more phonetic details regarding the tangible production of the utterance. There are two types of phonetic transcription: (i) broad phonetic transcription and (ii) narrow phonetic transcription.
- In broad phonetic transcription of speech, it is not attempted to record the huge number of contextual or idiosyncratic variations in pronunciation that take place in normal speech. Further, it attempts to describe the individual variations occurring among the speakers of a dialect or language.
- A narrow phonetic transcription comprises phonetic details that can usually be predicted by the 'rules'. There are some key 'rules' to convert a broad transcription to a narrow transcription.
- In phonemic transcription, a restricted set of symbols is used to capture the meaningful sound contrasts of a language.
- International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is the most comprehensively accepted system of symbols. In normal practice, this alphabet represents both phonemes and allophones even though it is defined in terms of the actual speech sounds.

## 10.8 KEY WORDS

- **Phonology:** It is the study of the patterns of sounds in a language and across languages.
- **Consonants:** It is a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract.
- **Transcription:** It is a systematic representation of language in written form.
- **International Phonetic Alphabet:** It is a set of symbols which can be used to represent the phones and phonemes of natural languages

## 10.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Write a short note on RP Phonology.
2. What are short vowels and long vowels?

3. Write a short note on General Indian English.
4. What are the guidelines for narrow transcriptions?

**Long-Answer Questions**

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1. Examine the differences between the vowel systems of the British Received Pronunciation and General Indian English.
2. Discuss in detail the types of phonetic transcriptions.
3. Explain the differences between phonemic and phonetic transcriptions.

## 10.10 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

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# BLOCK - IV
# USE AND VARIETY OF LINGUISTICS

# UNIT 11 LINGUISTICS

**Structure**



## 11.0 INTRODUCTION

Linguistics is concerned with the scientific study of language as it tries to uncover the underlying structure of language. This is made possible by the various sub-fields in linguistics which focus on the complexities of language. While Phonetics is concerned with the physical properties of speech sounds, phonology explains how sound operates in a given language. An understanding of linguistics is incomplete without a discussion of the salient features of language. This is because linguistics plays an important role in language teaching. Furthermore, it is useful in teaching of foreign languages, English language and writing skills.

## 11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of linguistics
- Discuss the basic concepts in linguistics
- Explain the use of linguistics in language teaching

## 11.2 WHAT IS LINGUISTICS



Some definitions of linguistics are:

'Linguistics will have to recognize laws operating universally in language, and in a strictly rational manner, separating general phenomena from those restricted to one branch of languages or another.'

–Ferdinand de Saussure

'The marvellous thing is that even in studying linguistics, we find that the universe as a whole is patterned, ordered, and to some degree intelligible to us.'

–Kenneth L. Pike

As discussed, linguistics can be defined as the scientific study of human language which tries to uncover the underlying structure of human language. Before the twentieth century, scholars primarily focused on the aspect of grammar and evolutionary aspect of language. This is known as philology. Philology is a branch of study of language where you try to trace the origin of words and primarily attach importance to the realm of vocabulary of a particular language. Linguistics is far wider than philology as the real aim of linguistics is to figure out the underlying structure not only of a language, but languages per se.

There are different subfields of linguistics which try to structurally figure out the ways in which language is manifested by us. The different sub-fields include:

- Phonetics, the study of the physical properties of speech (or signed) production and perception,
- Phonology, the study of sounds (or signs) as discrete, abstract elements in the speaker's mind that distinguish meaning,
- Morphology, the study of internal structures of words and how they can be modified,
- Syntax, the study of underlying structures of sentences,
- Semantics, the study of the meaning of words and how words combine to form the meanings of sentences,
- Pragmatics, the study of how utterances are used in communicative acts, and the role played by context and non-linguistic knowledge in the transmission of meaning, and
- Discourse analysis, the analysis of language use in texts (spoken, written, or signed).

There are more areas which come under the area of linguistics or are connected with linguistics; some areas which are directly connected are:

- Sociolinguistics, the study of variation in language and its relationship with social factors.

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- Applied linguistics, the study of language-related issues applied in everyday life, notably language policies, planning, and education,
- Stylistics, the study of linguistic factors that place a discourse in context, and
- Semiotics, the study which investigates the relationship between signs and what they signify more broadly.

There are even more areas which are remotely linked to the field of linguistics. They are bio linguistics, clinical linguistics, computational linguistics, developmental linguistics, evolutionary linguistics, historical linguistics or diachronic linguistics, language geography, linguistic typology, neuro-linguistics, psycholinguistics, and so on. Thus, there is no limit to the way in which language is studied in the present day from a scientific point of view. As days progress, linguists are trying to uncover more fields and subfields of linguistics. The more you to study language per se, the more you can get into the depth of it, because of the complexity of its use.

### 11.2.1 Basic Notions

Linguistics can be divided into five distinct branches in accordance with functionality. These are discussed subsequently.

**Phonetics**

As the science of human speech sounds, it studies the defining characteristics of all human vocal sounds. It is related to the physical properties of speech sounds (phones); their physiological production, acoustic properties, auditory perception, and neurophysiological status. Phonetics is a multi-layered subject that focuses on speech. While researching phonetics there are three basic areas of study:

- **Articulatory phonetics:** It refers to the study of the production of speech by the articulatory and vocal tract of the speaker.
- **Acoustic phonetics:** It refers to the study of the transmission of speech from the speaker to the listener.
- **Auditory phonetics:** It refers to the study of phonetics of the reception and perception of speech by the listener.

**Phonology**

Phonology is used to sort out which sounds are important for causing differences in meaning and which are not, and to establish rules to account for the variations in sounds involved. It studies the different kinds of sounds that are found in a language, their pattern and relationships and is viewed as a subsidiary field to linguistics. It deals with the sound systems of languages. Phonetics is about the physical production, acoustic transmission and perception of the sounds of speech. Phonology explains the way sounds operate within a given language or across languages for encoding meaning. The term 'phonology' is used in linguistics as a greater part of the 20th century as a cover term uniting phonemics and phonetics.

### Phonetics and phonology

Historical evidence has proved that speech developed before writing. A child learns to speak first and the written form of the language is taught to him only when he begins his formal education. There are many people in the world that can speak a language but cannot write. Moreover, many languages of the world lack a written form. Hence, the first level of linguistic analysis is phonetics which is the science of human speech sounds and studies the defining characteristics of all human vocal sounds. The next level of analysis naturally is to identify the sounds that are important for causing differences in meaning and which are not and to establish rules to account for the variations in the sounds involved. Thus, phonology concerns itself with the types of sounds which occur in a given language and patterns of relationships they form as the sound systems of the language.

The study of phonetic composition of utterances has revealed that different languages not only use different selections from the articulatory possibilities of the human vocal tract but also organize these selections differently in the process of contrasting sounds and possibilities of combining them in utterances. As a result, two separate ways of studying speech sounds are recognized in linguistics: phonetics–which studies and analyses the sounds of languages with a focus on their articulation, transmission and perception; and phonology – which is the study and analysis of the use of different ranges of speech sounds by languages and the systems of contrasting sound features found in them.

Both phonetics and phonology focus on the same subject matter, i.e. speech sounds but they are concerned with them from different points of view. Phonetics is descriptive and classificatory in nature and is concerned with speech sounds and their functions in language. Phonology is more particular and focuses on a particular language or languages and is functional in the sense of the actual working or functioning of speech sounds in a language or languages. Therefore, phonology has been called functional phonetics by linguists.

### Branches of phonetics

There are several approaches to the study of different sounds produced in languages. The different branches of phonetics focus on varying sounds produced by human voice. The following are the branches of phonetics:

- **Acoustic phonetics:** Acoustics is a branch of physics that studies the physical properties of speech sounds such as frequency, amplitude and time period involved in their transmission. Since a very long time it was believed that production of speech sounds must have some basic principles and it only recently become possible to record and measure various features of sound waves with the help of instruments. Acoustic phoneticians analyze the speech waves with the help of these instruments in order to describe their properties. Such an analysis of sound is best represented graphically by a spectrogram. The study of acoustic phonetics was hugely enhanced in

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the late 19th century by the invention of the Edison phonograph. The phonograph let the speech signal to be recorded and then later processed and analyzed. By replaying the identical speech signal from the phonograph many times, filtering it every time with a different band-pass filter, a spectrogram of the speech utterance can be built up. A series of papers by Ludimar Hermann published in *Pflüger's Archives* in the last two decades of the nineteenth century investigated the specific properties of vowels and consonants by using the Edison phonograph, and in these papers itself the term formant was first introduced. Hermann also played back vowel recordings made with the Edison phonograph at various speeds for distinguishing between Willis' and Wheatstone's theories of vowel production. Further advances in acoustic phonetics became possible by the invention of the telephone industry (coincidentally, Alexander Graham Bell's father, Alexander Melville Bell, was a phonetician). During World War II, work process at the Bell Telephone Laboratories (who invented the spectrograph) hugely facilitated the systematic study of the spectral properties of the following:

- Periodic speech sounds
- Aperiodic speech sounds
- Vocal tract resonances
- Vowel formants
- Voice quality
- Prosody

- **Auditory phonetics:** Auditory phonetics is the study of the process of hearing and the perception of speech sounds. It defines sounds on the basis of how they reach the ear drum and focuses on different auditory impressions of quality, pitch and loudness of sounds.
- **Articulatory phonetics:** Articulatory phonetics is a branch of human physiology which distinguishes sounds on the basis of the manner and place of articulation of sounds. Speech is produced by the air pressure movements made by the vocal organs like lungs, larynx, soft palate, tongue, teeth and lips. The knowledge of the organs of speech, their relation to each other and the way in which they are used in speaking provides a sound basis for the classification of sounds in human languages. The field of articulatory phonetics is a subfield of phonetics. In studying articulation, phoneticians explain how humans produce speech sounds via the interaction of different physiological structures. Generally, articulatory phonetics is concerned with the transformation of aerodynamic energy into acoustic energy. Aerodynamic energy refers to the airflow through the vocal tract. Its potential form is air

pressure; its kinetic form is the actual dynamic airflow. Acoustic energy is variation in the air pressure that can be represented as sound waves, which are then perceived by the human auditory system as sound.

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**Check Your Progress**

1. Define linguistics.
2. What is sociolinguistics?
3. What is articulatory phonetics?
4. State the three branches of phonetics.
5. What is auditory phonetics?

## 11.3 LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE

Language refers to the cognitive faculty of human beings that enables them to learn and use systems of complex communication.

Based on another definition, language is a formal system of symbols that are governed by grammatical rules, which associate specific signs with specific meanings. This definition emphasizes the fact that human languages are governed by rules and, hence, are closed structural systems.

Yet another definition sees language as a system of communication that enables human beings to cooperate with their fellow beings. This definition emphasizes the basic functions of language and the fact that humans need it to express them and for manipulating objects in their own environment.

Human language is different in comparison with other forms of communication, like those used by the animals, essentially as it is stimulus free. Moreover, humans can form an infinite set of utterances through a finite set of elements, and as the symbols and grammatical rules of any particular language are mainly arbitrary, the system can only be used through social interaction and cultural transmission.

Every speech community has a language of its own, which is owned, perceived and recognized for communication by the members of that community. Hence, there are several languages spoken all over the world by different speech communities and cultures. But all human languages have two forms, i.e., the spoken form that consists of sounds and the written form consisting of symbols to represent these sounds.

Language is defined by various scholars in various ways:

- 'Language is that system by which sounds and meanings are related.' (Fromkin and Rodman, 1974)

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- 'Language is the most sophisticated and versatile means available to human beings for the communication of meaning.' (Brown, 1984)
- 'Language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols.' (Sapir, 1921)
- 'Language is the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory symbols.' (Hall, 1964)
- Language is a 'system of sounds, words, patterns etc used by humans to communicate thoughts and feelings.' (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1989)
- 'Language is a patterned system of arbitrary sound signals, characterized by structure dependence, creativity, displacement, duality and cultural transmission.' (Aitchinson, 1987)

These definitions suggest that it is hard to define language in a singular parameter as it is a complex phenomenon. This complexity of language has attracted the attention of philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Austin, Searde, Grice and others. It has also attracted psychologists such as Piaget, Fodor, Garrett and others, physiologists such as Luria and lenneberg, and even neurosurgeons such as Penfield and Roberts. Therefore, it is obvious that the study of language in all its aspects is beyond the knowledge of linguistics. This is not a problem of linguistics as all natural sciences have felt the necessity of vigorously delimiting their scope and field of analysis as well.

### Salient features of language

Human languages are different from animal communication in their uniqueness and complexity. As a result, language has been the focus of attention of philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and, of course linguists, whose preoccupation is naturally with all aspects of language. Human languages display such unique complexities that a simple definition of language is rendered impossible and inadequate. Hence, linguists have devoted much of their focus in analysing the features that distinguish language from other forms of communication. They agree that a language must display the following properties:

- **Duality**: The most striking feature of human language is the fact that it is structured at two distinct levels:
  - o The primary level consisting of units or sounds
  - o The secondary level consisting of elements or words and their meanings

  For example, take a simple word like 'tree'. It consists of three sounds- /t/ , /r/and /ee/ at the primary level. At the secondary level, these three sounds combine to form a word, i.e., /t/ + /r/ + /ee/ = tree, which has a specific meaning. Here, three sounds meaningless in themselves combine to make a perfectly meaningful unit. This is referred to as duality.

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A cow has less than ten vocal signals; a chicken has around twenty whereas a fox has over thirty. Dolphins have between twenty and thirty, and so do gorillas and chimpanzees. Most animals can use only one basic sound, i.e., the number of messages an animal can send is limited to the number of basic sounds, or infrequently the basic sounds plus a few simple combinations.

Human languages work in a different manner. Each language has a store of sound units or phonemes that are identical to many basic sounds that are possessed by animals; the average number being between thirty and forty. But every phoneme is meaningless in isolation. It becomes meaningful only when it is merged with other phonemes, i.e., sounds such as f, g, d and o mean nothing separately. They have a meaning only when they are joined together in different ways, like fog, dog and god.

This organization of language in two layers—a layer of sound that combines into a second layer of larger units—is known as duality or double articulation.

- **Arbitrariness:** In any language, the sounds develop first and then arises the need to assign symbols and meanings to them. The sound–symbol–meaning correlation was made totally arbitrarily because there is no direct relationship between a particular sound and its symbol or meaning. This relationship is completely based on convention and cannot be explained in terms of logic and reason. With the exception of some onomatopoeic words like hush, hiss or thud the choice of symbols and meanings for sounds and words was made arbitrarily. It is a term given to choices and actions subject to individual will, judgment or preferences that are based solely upon an individual's opinion or discretion.

  Arbitrary decisions might not necessarily be the same as random decisions. For instance, during the 1973 oil crisis, Americans were allowed to purchase gasoline only on odd-numbered days if their license plate was odd and on even-numbered days if their license plate was even. The system was quite well defined and not random in its restrictions; however, as license plate numbers are completely unrelated to a person's capability to purchase gasoline, it was still an arbitrary division of people. Similarly, schoolchildren are usually organized by their surname in alphabetical order, a non-random but still an arbitrary method, at least in cases where surnames are irrelevant.

- **Productivity:** Since language is stimulus free, it is productive in the sense that its flexibility enables us to produce and interpret a sentence in different ways. For example, if you are hungry, you can make yourself understood in many ways by using verbal as well as non-verbal communication. But if a dog is hungry, it has limited ways of explaining to the master its hunger and the stimulus of hunger has to be present in order to make him act in a certain manner. Noam Chomsky, the well-known linguist, has called this 'the creative aspect of language', which accounts for the infinite length and number of sentences that can be produced by a human being.

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Productivity is the measure of output from a production process, per unit of input; for instance labour productivity is basically measured as a ratio of output per labour-hour, an input. Productivity may be thought of as a metric of the technical or engineering efficiency of production. The emphasis of productivity is on quantitative metrics of input, and sometimes output. Productivity is quite distinct from metrics of allocative efficiency, which consider both the monetary value (price) of the goods and the cost of inputs used, and it is also distinct from metrics of profitability, which talks about the difference between revenues that are obtained from output and expenses associated with consumption of inputs.

- **Rule-governed behaviour:** Language is a system that is governed by rules. Thus, learning a language entails the learning of the rules of that language by which an infinite number of sentences can be generated. If the grammar, i.e., the rules of the language, is internalized, an unlimited number of sentences can be formed and explained. For example, sentences in English follow the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) rule. Hence, it is possible to construct and explain sentences having this pattern – Ram killed the snake, Martin plays football. But any change made in this pattern will lead to the notion of syntactic (structure) and semantic (meaning) ungrammaticality.
- **Displacement:** Since human communication is not in response to a stimulus, it has the property of displacement. This enables us to talk about the past or the future, of things far away and even people who are not present before us. For instance, you can talk about your past experiences and visualize and plan for the future. It is possible for us to refer to somebody who is not present before us at that moment. This property of language also accounts for the fact that human beings can tell lies, imagine or dream of things not seen before.

  In linguistics, displacement is the ability of human beings to converse about those things that are not immediately present. In 1960, Charles F. Hockett suggested displacement as one of 'design-features' distinguishing human language from animal language: apparently, man is quite unique in being capable enough to talk about things that are remote in space or time (or both) and from where the talking goes on. This feature—'displacement'—quite definitely lacks in the vocal signalling of man's closest relatives, though it does occur in bee-dancing. Honeybees use the waggle dance for communicating the location of source of nectar. The degree of displacement shown in this example is quite limited as compared to human language. A bee can only converse about the location of the most recent food source that it has visited. It cannot tell any idea regarding a food source at a particular point in the past, nor can it analyse about food sources in the future. Along with it, displacement in the waggle dance is strictly restricted due to the language's lack of creativity and productivity. The bees can describe direction and distance, but it has been experimentally determined that it lacks the sign

for 'above'. It is also unsure about whether bees can communicate about non-existent nectar for the purpose of deception or not.



- **Species specificity:** Language is a phenomenon that is unique to the human species. Linguists have closely studied the language acquisition process and have come to the conclusion that it is related to the natural indices of the brain and that language capacity is 'generally coded in human beings.' This led Chomsky to say that 'all and only human beings are capable of human language'.
- **Discreteness:** Language is a system of sounds and symbols. It makes use of sounds, words and phrases which make up sentences. The written form of language is just an attempt at representing the spoken form with the help of certain symbols. Each word or grammatical construction as well as symbol is distinct from one another. Language comprises discrete units, which are used in combination for creating meaning.
- **Cultural transmission:** Language is culturally transmitted from one generation to another. As a child grows up, he learns the language spoken by those around him. Since it is a social phenomenon, apart from correctness, the notion of appropriateness is also necessary. Particular forms appropriate to particular situations are largely conditioned by the cultural norms of a particular society. Besides acquiring the rules of the language, one must have full knowledge of these requirements if he has to master the language. For example, when a person acquires a language, he also learns the usage of certain words or terms and the context in which they can be used.

  It is the manner in which a group of people or animals within a society or culture try to learn and pass on some new information. Learning styles are largely influenced by culture socialization of children and young people.

  The basic aspect of culture is that it is not passed through biologically from the parents to the offspring, but is rather learned through both experience and participation. The procedure by which a child learns about his or her own culture is known as enculturation.

  Based on cultural learning, people create, remember and deal with ideas. They learn and apply particular systems of symbolic meaning. Cultures have been compared with sets of control mechanisms, plans, recipes, rules or instructions.
- **Patterning:** Human languages display the property of patterning. They are neither the result of a chance combination of sounds nor used in a random manner. Patterning is involved at both the phonological and the grammatical level. The language items combine with certain specific items and can be replaced by others which fit the pattern. Therefore, language is a complex and intricate network of interlinked elements and the placing of each item depends on the identity of the others. Patterning is of two types:

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(i) **Low-level patterning:** In low-level patterning, the basic unit of the lower level has no meaning at all, whereas words, the basic unit of the higher level, usually have meaning. You can imagine a hypothetical linguistic system in which specific phonemes had special relationships with meanings. However, no human language is like that. You cannot guess the meaning of a word, even in the unclear terms, from the phonemes that constitute it.

(ii) **Higher-level patterning:** The higher level of patterning is fairly dissimilar. For example, the meaning of a clause is largely a product of the meanings of the individual words that it contains. Syntactic rules try to recognize the role of words in a clause, and the relationships between the words.

- **Evolutionary:** All living languages are dynamic, i.e., constantly changing. Everyday new words are being added to the vocabulary depending on the needs of the users. Similarly, usages and meanings of words change with the passage of time. Changes in language keep pace with the changes in society and nature.

  Evolutionary linguistics is the scientific study of the origins and development of language. The basic challenge in this research is the insufficient information about empirical data: spoken language specifically leaves no traces. This led to abandonment of the field for more than an era. Since the late 1980s, the field has been revived due to the progress made in the following related fields:

  - Psycholinguistics
  - Neurolinguistics
  - Evolutionary anthropology
  - Evolutionary psychology
  - Cognitive science

### 11.3.1 Uses in Language Teaching

In the learning of language, Linguistics helps students understand the origin of words and languages, historical applications and their relevance in the present times. This approach gives an insight into the nuanced aspects of language.

#### Uses of Linguistics in Teaching

The use of linguistics in education is growing and is often cross-disciplinary in nature. It is used by language instructors as well as for early childhood development, psychology and anthropology education. Linguistics is not only concerned with the study of language but also delves into the evolution and historical context of language, speech and memory development. It is also concerned with the structure and meaning of speech, and of written languages as well as an understanding of the context in which certain words are used.

### Foreign Languages

In the teaching of a foreign language, linguistics is helpful to a language teacher as it provides historical context to the origin of word. This can enhance the students' understanding of the language. Moreover, it helps the student in understanding the differences among conversational speech, formal speech, and abstract rules about word usage in different cultures. This can actually overlap into regional dialects within the same country.

### English Language

Language teachers who give instruction on the English language are also reliant on linguistics. Linguistics enhances the students' understanding of regional dialects and colloquialisms. Students are able to identify the origins of sayings and phrases that have evolved over time or sayings which are no longer relevant.

Linguistics can also help guard against self-embarrassment, using words that are common, but have historical context that may make them inappropriate or insulting in polite society.

### Linguistics in Writing

Linguistics also helps students in writing and composing materials which have the desired effect. For example, linguistics plays a role in making an essay compelling, if the writer can use their knowledge of words to better solidify and present an argument. Similarly, an understanding of linguistics can help a creative writing student develop prose that appeals to the reader's sensibility and transports them to a different state of reality.

In a society which is extremely dependent on electronic media, composition, meaning and even true exchange of ideas through the written word can be lacking. Teaching and studying linguistics provides the tools necessary to preserve and advance the art of reading, writing and communication. This is essential in the educational arena, the workplace and in society.

**Check Your Progress**

6. Define language.
7. Why is language considered discrete?

## 11.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Linguistics can be defined as the scientific study of human language which tries to uncover the underlying structure of human language.

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2. Sociolinguistics is the study of variation in language and its relationship with social factors.
3. Articulatory phonetics refers to the study of the production of speech by the articulatory and vocal tract of the speaker.
4. The three branches of phonetics are acoustic phonetics, auditory phonetics and articulatory phonetics.
5. Auditory phonetics is the study of the process of hearing and the perception of speech sounds.
6. Language refers to the cognitive faculty of human beings that enables them to learn and use systems of complex communication.
7. Language is considered discrete as it comprises sounds and symbols which are used in combination for creating meaning.

## 11.5 SUMMARY

- Linguistics can be defined as the scientific study of human language which tries to uncover the underlying structure of human language.
- There are different subfields of linguistics which try to structurally figure out the ways in which language is manifested by us. The different sub-fields are Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics and Discourse analysis. There are more areas which come under the area of linguistics or are connected with linguistics. They are sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, stylistics and semiotics.
- Phonetics studies the defining characteristics of all human vocal sounds. It is related to the physical properties of speech sounds (phones); their physiological production, acoustic properties, auditory perception, and neurophysiological status.
- Phonology deals with the sound systems of languages. Phonetics is about the physical production, acoustic transmission and perception of the sounds of speech. Phonology explains the way sounds operate within a given language or across languages for encoding meaning.
- Both phonetics and phonology focus on the same subject matter, i.e. speech sounds but they are concerned with them from different points of view. Phonetics is descriptive and classificatory in nature and is concerned with speech sounds and their functions in language. Phonology is more particular and focuses on a particular language or languages and is functional in the sense of the actual working or functioning of speech sounds in a language or languages.
- There are several approaches to the study of different sounds produced in languages. The different branches of phonetics are acoustic phonetics, auditory phonetics and articulatory phonetics.

- Language is a formal system of symbols that are governed by grammatical rules, which associate specific signs with specific meanings.
- The most striking feature of human language is the fact that it is structured at two distinct levels:
  - o The primary level consisting of units or sounds
  - o The secondary level consisting of elements or words and their meanings
- In any language, the sounds develop first and then arises the need to assign symbols and meanings to them. The sound–symbol–meaning correlation was made totally arbitrarily because there is no direct relationship between a particular sound and its symbol or meaning. This relationship is completely based on convention and cannot be explained in terms of logic and reason.
- Since language is stimulus free, it is productive in the sense that its flexibility enables us to produce and interpret a sentence in different ways. For example, if you are hungry, you can make yourself understood in many ways by using verbal as well as non-verbal communication.
- Language is a system that is governed by rules. Thus, learning a language entails the learning of the rules of that language by which an infinite number of sentences can be generated.
- In linguistics, displacement is the ability of human beings to converse about those things that are not immediately present. In 1960, Charles F. Hockett suggested displacement as one of 'design-features' distinguishing human language from animal language.
- Language is a phenomenon that is unique to the human species. Linguists have closely studied the language acquisition process and have come to the conclusion that it is related to the natural indices of the brain and that language capacity is 'generally coded in human beings.'
- Language comprises discrete units, which are used in combination for creating meaning.
- Language is culturally transmitted from one generation to another.
- In the learning of language, Linguistics helps students understand the origin of words and languages, historical applications and their relevance in the present times. It is used by language instructors as well as for early childhood development, psychology and anthropology education. Moreover, it helps the student in understanding the differences among conversational speech, formal speech, and abstract rules about word usage in different cultures.

## 11.6 KEY WORDS

- **Philology:** It is a branch of study of language where you try to trace the origin of words.

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- **Phonetics:** It is the study of the physical properties of speech (or signed) production and perception.
- **Syntax:** It is the study of underlying structures of sentences.
- **Applied linguistics:** It is the study of language-related issues applied in everyday life, notably language policies, planning, and education.

## 11.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. What are the various sub-fields of linguistics?
2. Differentiate between phonetics and phonology.
3. Write a short note on the duality of language.
4. What, according to Noam Chomsky, is the 'creative aspect of language?
5. How can linguistics help in teaching of a foreign language?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the different branches of phonetics.
2. Examine the salient features of language.

## 11.8 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

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NOTES

# UNIT 12 ANIMAL AND HUMAN COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE VARIETIES

**Structure**



## 12.0 INTRODUCTION

Human language differs from animal communication in varied ways. Language is arbitrary, productive, creative, systematic, vocalic, social, non-instinctive and conventional. These traits of language set it apart from animal communication. Not only this, there are several variations of language in wide use such as dialects and idiolects. The presence of dialect and idiolect is due to the difference in the speaker's knowledge of a language and the production of actual utterances. This difference was explained by Noam Chomsky who introduced the concept of competence and performance. Today, there are several branches of linguistics which are studied and research upon to enhance our understanding of the way languages are spoken. The prominent branches among them are psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics.

## 12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the features of language that differentiates it from animal communication
- Discuss idiolect and dialect as language varieties
- Examine the major branches of linguistics

## 12.2 ANIMAL COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN COMMUNICATION

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Language is human so it differs from animal communication in several ways. Language has many characteristics, but the following are the most important ones: language is arbitrary, productive, creative, systematic, vocalic, social, non-instinctive and conventional. These characteristics of language set human language apart from animal communication. Some of these features may be part of animal communication; yet they do not form part of it in total.

**Language is Arbitrary**: Arbitrariness is one of the most significant features of human language. Language is thought to be arbitrary in the sense that there is no inherent relation between the words (morphs) of a language and their meanings or the ideas conveyed by them. We do not know why we call a thing or an idea by the sound or set of sounds (phonemes) that we use for it. There is no reason why a female adult human being is called a 'woman' in English, 'aurat' in Urdu, 'zen' in Persian and 'femine' in French. This feature of language where the choice of words selected to mean a particular thing or idea is purely arbitrary is significant in language. Ferdinand de Saussure in his famous book *Course in General Linguistics*, a book compiled by his students from his lectures, emphasizes on this feature of language, as he points out the arbitrariness of human language. Except for the onomatopoeic words (words which carries with it the sense of it, for example, the snake '*hisses*' – the hissing sound connotes its sense) all other words or meaningful sounds of a language are arbitrary.

But one should keep in mind that once a word (morph, in the sense of a sound or set of sounds) is selected for a particular referent, it more or less remains as such, though we could find out that meaning of words changes over the years, as language is not a constant thing. Language evolves over the ages with its use. For example, in the eighteenth century, 'whitewash' meant doing make up by the females, but over the course of years the meaning has changed altogether.

**Language is Social**: Language is a medium of communication among members of a particular community (also known as Speech Community; that is the community which is bonded in terms of all the people of that particular community sharing the same language as a means of communication). Language, in that sense, is a possession of a social group, comprising an indispensable set of rules which permits its members to relate to each other, to interact with each other, to co-operate with each other; it is a social institution. Language exists in society; it is a means of nourishing and developing culture and establishing human relations.

In other words, it can be said that whatever we do, we do it in terms of language. Nothing exists in this world for humans which do not have a name. Naming is the way in which we incorporate everything we come across within our cultural purview. Therefore, it can be said that the world exists within language.

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**Language is Symbolic**: Language is not only used for speaking, but also for the purposes of writing. For each sound or combination of sounds in a particular language a corresponding symbol are employed to demote its meaning. These symbols are arbitrarily chosen (similar to the way sounds are chosen arbitrarily) and conventionally accepted and employed. Words in a language are not mere signs or figures, but symbols of meaning. The intelligibility of a language depends on a correct interpretation of these symbols. Correct interpretation of the symbols assumes that the society as a whole (the speech community) shares among themselves certain codes which everybody follows so that the meaning becomes intelligible.

**Language is Systematic**: Although language is symbolic, yet its symbols are arranged in a particular system. All languages have their system of arrangements. Every language is a system of systems. All languages have phonological and grammatical systems, and within a system there are several sub-systems. For example, within the grammatical system we have morphological and syntactic systems, and within these two sub-systems we have systems such as those of plural, of mood, of aspect, of tense, etc. For example, in English, the syntactical word order is Subject – Verb – Object (SVO); and everywhere in the world, English-speaking people use this order. The word syntactical order of Hindi is Subject – Object – Verb (SOV).

**Language is Vocal**: Language is primarily made up of vocal sounds only produced by a physiological articulatory mechanism in the human body. In the beginning, it appeared as vocal sounds only. Writing came much later, as an attempt to represent vocal sounds. Writing is only the graphic representation of the sounds of the language. So the linguists are of the view that speech is primary.

**Language is Non-instinctive and Conventional**: No language was created in a day out of a mutually agreed upon formula by a group of humans. Language is the outcome of evolution and convention. Each generation transmits this convention on to the next. Like all human institutions languages also change and die, grow and expand. Every language then is a convention in a community. It is non-instinctive because it is acquired by human beings. Nobody gets a language in heritage; he acquires it because he has an innate ability to do so. (It is to be noted that many scholars have doubted the theory of Innatism and consequently many theories of language acquisition have come into existence.)

**Language is Productive and Creative**: Language has creativity and productivity. The structural elements of human language can be combined to produce new utterances, which neither the speaker nor his hearers may ever have made or heard before; yet both sides understand each other without difficulty. Language changes according to the needs of society.

Finally, language has other characteristics such as *Duality* referring to the two systems of sound and meaning, *Displacement* which means the ability to talk

across time and space, *Humanness* which means that animals cannot acquire it, *Universality* which refers to the equilibrium across humanity on linguistic grounds, *Competence* and *Performance* which means that language is innate and produced is society. Furthermore, language is culturally transmitted. It is learnt by an individual from his elders, and is transmitted from one generation to another. Thus using J. Firth's term, language is a '*polysystametic*'. It is also open to be studied from multifaceted angles.

**Charles F. Hockett: Thirteen Design Features of Language**

Charles F Hockett in his famous study on the difference between human language and animals talks about thirteen design features of human language which makes it distinct. The thirteen features are as following:

The 'vocal auditory channel' is the most obvious of the characteristic of human beings as it is through the vocal auditory channel that the sounds are created. The vocal auditory channel is distinct from the other channels like Gesture or the Dancing of the bees etc.

'Rapid fading' and 'broadcast transmission and directional reception' are the next two which stems from the physics of sound and are the unavoidable consequences of the first. The sounds that are uttered by humans can be heard for a short period of time – the sound is there in the air for a brief moment before it fades away, as does all sound. Therefore, one of the important characteristics of human language is rapid fading. The next feature, broadcast transmission and directional reception is self-explanatory as these two features signify that the speaker whenever he creates certain sounds to mean something makes it for a particular direction to be transmitted to. In other words, the sounds uttered are for a listener and therefore having a particular direction.

'Interchangeability' and 'Total Feedback' are the next two important features according to Hockett. As the terms themselves suggest, when we interact, we take turns to speak or share our thoughts, ideas and emotions, as communication is never a one way process. It requires at least two individuals. Therefore, it is necessary that the two individuals while interacting take turns in communicating. Moreover, without feedback no communication is complete as one can only understand whether he has been understood or not when he receives the feedback. Therefore, interchangeability and feedback becomes such important features of human language. The significance of these two features of human language – 'interchangeability' and 'total feedback' becomes clear upon comparison with other systems of communication. In general, a speaker of a language can reproduce any linguistic message he can understand, whereas the characteristic courtship motions of the male and female stickleback are different, and neither can act out those appropriate to the other. For that matter in the communication of a human mother and infant neither is apt to transmit the characteristic signals or to manifest the typical responses of the other. Again, the speaker of a language hears, by total

feedback, everything of linguistic relevance in what he says. Feedback is important, since it makes possible the so-called internalization of communicative behavior that constitutes at least a major portion of thinking.

The sixth design feature, 'specialization' refers to the fact that the bodily effort and spreading sound waves of speech serve no function except as signals. A dog, panting with his tongue hanging out, is performing a biologically essential activity, since this is how dogs cool themselves off and maintain the proper body temperature.

The next feature is 'semanticity'. When a dog is panting, it is not a signal meaning that the dog is hot; it is a part of being hot. In language, however, a message triggers the particular result it does because there are relatively fixed associations between elements in messages (example words) and recurrent features or situations of the world around us. For example, the English word 'salt' means salt, not sugar or pepper. In the semantic communicative system, the ties between meaningful message elements and their meanings can be arbitrary and non-arbitrary. In language the ties are arbitrary. Why should we call 'salt' the salt? We have no answer to that. Between the signifier and the signified the relationship is that of arbitrariness. This is the next feature of human language.

The feature of 'discreteness' in the elementary signaling units of a language contrasts with the use of sound effects by way of vocal gesture. There is an effectively continuous scale of degrees to which one may raise his voice as in anger, or lower it to signal confidentially. Bee-dancing also is continuous rather than discrete. Man is apparently almost unique in being able to talk about things that are remote in space and time (or both) from where the talking goes on.

This feature – 'displacement' – seems to be definitely lacking in the vocal signaling of man's closest relatives, though it does occur in bee-dancing.

Another of the most important feature of language is 'productivity'; that is the capacity to say things that have never been said or heard before and yet to be understood by other speakers of the language. If a gibbon makes any vocal sound at all, it is one or another of a small finite repertory of familiar calls. The gibbon call system can be characterized as closed. Language is open, or productive in the sense that one can coin new utterances by putting together pieces familiar from old utterances, assembling them by patterns of arrangement also familiar in old utterances.

Human genes carry the capacity to acquire a language, and probably also a strong capacity to acquire a new language, and probably also a strong drive toward such acquisition, but the detailed conventions of any one language are transmitted extragenetically by learning and teaching. To what extent such 'traditional transmission' plays a part in gibbon calls or for other mammalian systems of vocal signals is not known, though in some instances the uniformity of the sounds made by a species, wherever the species is found over the world, is so great that genetics must be responsible.

The meaningful elements in any language – 'words' in everyday parlance, 'morphemes' to the linguist – constitute an enormous stock. Yet they are represented by small arrangements of a relatively very small stock of distinguishable sounds which are in themselves wholly meaningless. This 'duality of pattering' is illustrated by the English words.

Thus, these above mentioned thirteen features of the language of the human beings create a distinctive mark which makes us differentiate between the human sound system and the animal communication.

As discussed, language has hordes of characteristics which make it unique to human beings. Moreover, language can be used in multifarious ways in different social and cultural setting and in different circumstances which leads to immense variations in use of language. Language varies according to class, gender, region, from person to person, from context to context and so on and so forth. As there are multifarious ways of using language and loads of characteristics of language, therefore it is pertinent that language can be studies and is studied from various points of view.

**Check Your Progress**

1. Why is language considered arbitrary?
2. Who is the author of *A Course in General Linguistics*?

## 12.3 LANGUAGE VARIETIES

In variation studies, Noam Chomsky, a famous linguist and a political thinker of the twentieth century, makes a significant distinction between competence and performance. Chomsky differentiates competence, which is an idealized capacity, from performance being the production of actual utterances. According to him, competence is the ideal speaker-hearer's knowledge of his or her language. It is the 'mental reality' which is responsible for all those aspects of language use which can be characterized as 'linguistic'. Performance refers to the specific utterances, including grammatical mistakes and non-linguistic features. It includes hesitations that accompany the use of language. Based on the performance of language of the users, variation studies find empirical data which helps in formulating theories. For example, the Hindi spoken in New Delhi and the Hindi spoken in eastern Uttar Pradesh or Haryana are very different. Similarly, the English used in India is very different from the English used in United States of America or Caribbean or England. English is often different not only across the borders, but even within India. A Bengali person speaking English would use English in a very different manner that than of a South Indian English speaking person. Even the same person would speak different English in different contexts/circumstances. For example, in a formal

setting, such as in a meeting or an interview, a person would use words which are much more formal (father, instead of dad, child, instead of kid etc.) than in an informal context, such as talking to a friend or a talking to a person from the same peer group.

Thus, there are varieties in the use of language. When you ponder over the divergent language use, you can only think in terms of the complexity of language variation studies deal with this performative aspect of language use.

### Language and Class: A Study of William Labov

William Labov's classic work *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* has immense importance in this context. He investigated the sound 'r' in New York City. He believed that r-pronunciation after vowels as in 'park' and 'fourth' was being reintroduced into New York speech. His hypothesis was that the pronunciation of 'r' by New York City speakers varies according to the social class that they belong to. In order to investigate whether the pronunciation varied in a systematic way, he carried out a large scale survey. Thus, his study is an important step in the setting of the model of language variation.

He tested the hypothesis by walking around three New York City department stores of Saks, Macy's, and S. Klein. These are distinguished according to the social class groups they cater to. Saks caters to the prestigious upper social class; Macy's caters to the middle class, while Klein caters to the lower class. Labov asked the shop assistants working in the stores, the location of the departments he knew to be located on the fourth floor. He thus, elicited the use of 'r'. He assumed that by investigating the speech of the shop assistants, he would get a good idea of the social stratification of the customers. This is because it would be mirrored in a similar stratification of these shop assistants. When they answered, Labov would seek a careful repetition of the 'fourth floor' by pretending not to have heard the initial response. The incidence of r-pronunciation was found to be maximum at Saks where it was used over sixty percent of the time, at Macy's it was inserted fifty percent of the time and under twenty percent at S. Klein. As he had anticipated, the results suggested that the pronunciation of /r/ varies according to the social status of the speakers. The analysis resulted in a pattern called class stratification.

Labov claimed that the r-pronunciation is highly valued. It is associated with the upper middle class even though members of that class may not use it on all occasions. A further analysis of the department store makes its firm that that low social class people tend to change their pronunciation as they always aspire to get up in the order and reach a place of status and prestige. His final analysis also tried to prove the fact that the use of r-pronunciation increases the formality off style along with the class status. The most interesting research of Labov was when he said that the lower middle class speakers outperformed the upper middle class speakers when they read words lists and minimal pairs. Labov termed it hypercorrection. Therefore, in many cases, where the r – pronunciation is not

there, r is deliberately pronounced. This is because it is a matter of outperforming the upper class. Therefore, the word 'idea' is pronounced as 'aydiyar'. This happens because the speakers try to overcompensate or overcorrect their pronunciation by believing that it is incorrect to drop 'r' because it denotes prestige.

Labov's contribution to sociolinguistics is that he made it clear how language changes or varies with the variation of class, age, and gender. Language is a social phenomenon, but each individual had his or her own mark in the way he or she speaks or writes. Therefore, the study of that becomes very important because language is not a constant thing. It is this interaction of the small variations in language which paves the path for the development of the language. Labov has undoubtedly been able to establish that there is nothing pathological associated with language variation.

There has also been a criticism of Labov's classic work for the methodology. He opined that prestige and status are involved with the pronunciation of 'r'. Labov's procedure for identifying the linguistic and social variables is suspected, as the investigator began with a predetermined list of linguistic variables and their variants. It also includes a range of hypotheses about the social variables such as sex, region, age and social class etc. to which the linguistic variables are related. It is believed that there is a danger of prejudging the issue as it starts with the wrong hypotheses. Another problem with Labov's style is that it assumes that societies are rigidly stratified, with different socio-economic layers stacked up on top of one another. It is thought that this is an oversimplification of the way the society functions.

There are many criticisms against Labov's classic work *The Social Stratification of English in New York City.* However, Labov's study is important for sociolinguistics as he pointed out how language varies in its use. So, when we make theoretical generalizations about language, they are merely abstract things. In reality, language is a much more complex affair. It is an affair that needs to be understood in its complexity to make us realize the power relationships in the society and the social fabric of the society.

**Idiolect**

Idiolect is a term coined by linguist Bernard Bloch from the Greek word *idio* (personal, private) and the word *(dia)lect* to mean a variety of language which is unique to an individual. Idiolect, in other words, can be said to be referring to 'a person's individual speech patterns' (Frege), but the term is not so easy to define as there are at least two claims about the relationship between idiolects and language, and are as follows:

- Idiolects are defined as deviations from a common standard, deviations from a language intended as a social institution or convention (thesis of the *priority of language over idiolects*)

- A language is defined as the result of the way individuals use linguistic expressions in different contexts (thesis of the *priority of idiolects over language*).

Thus, whether idiolects are variations or deviations from language or many idiolects make a language is something which has caused difficulty for the linguists. Parole is the individual way of speaking or using language which is very personalized and idiosyncratic. Saussure was of the opinion that the field of studies of linguistics can only be langue and not the parole. The sociolinguists try their best to study every aspect of language in all its varieties. They do so in order to understand the way people belonging to a speech community vary in their use of language and yet are intelligible to each other.

We might have noticed that each one of us has a unique way of speaking or using language. We are different from others as we use language in a different way than others do. This is not only limited to speaking but also to writing. Idiolect is manifested by patterns of vocabulary. This refers to the individual's lexicon, grammatical uses, and pronunciations that are unique to the individual. Each one's language production is unique in some sense. Individual variation of language use is of no concern to prescriptive linguists. They are primarily interested in the standard variety. To the descriptive grammarians, this is of utmost importance as idiolect points out the real use of language in particular contexts.

**Some Observations on Idiolect**

Let us now discuss some of the conclusions about idiolects which has been made by some of the renowned linguists.

- 'Because each of us belongs to different social groups, we each speak a language variety made up of a combination of features slightly different from those characteristic of any other speaker of the language. The language variety unique to a single speaker of a language is called an idiolect. Your idiolect includes the vocabulary appropriate to your various interests and activities, pronunciations reflective of the region in which you live or have lived, and variable styles of speaking that shift subtly depending on whom you are addressing.' (Thomas P. Klammer, Muriel R. Schulz, and Angela Della Volpe, *Analyzing English Grammar*. Longman, 2007)
- 'Almost all speakers make use of several idiolects, depending on the circumstances of communication. For example, when family members talk to each other, their speech habits typically differ from those any one of them would use in, say, an interview with a prospective employer. The concept of idiolect refers to a very specific phenomenon—the speech variety, or linguistic system, used by a particular individual. All those idiolects that have enough in common to appear at least superficially alike belong to a dialect. The term dialect, then, is an abstraction.

(Zdenk Salzmann, Language, Culture, and Society. Westview, 2003)

- 'It must be noted that the very existence of the term idiolect as a proper object of linguistic description represents a defeat of the Saussurian notion of *langue* as an object of uniform social understanding.'
  *(William Labov, Sociolinguistic Patterns. Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1972)*

If we go by our interest in language use, we will wonder that almost no user of a language is using the standard variety and that everybody is using an idiolect. In other words, it can be said that a language is an 'ensemble of idiolects... rather than an entity per se.

**Dialect**

The term dialect has its origin from the Greek Language word *dialektos.* It is significant to the sociolinguists and linguists in two ways. On one hand, dialect refers to a particular variety of a language that is a characteristic of a particular group of that language's speakers. On the other hand, it refers to a variety of language which is supposedly socially subordinate to a regional or national standard language. Thus, dialect is being used by linguists with varied connotations. The first way of looking at dialect is politically neutral in terms of not giving any prestige value to the variety of language. The second one is politically motivated where the users of a dialect is usually looked down upon by the users of the standard language. For example, let us take the example of Maithili or Bhojpuri. Are they languages on their own or are they dialects? If they are dialects in the sense of variety of Hindi then, the question of the status of the language does not come into question. But when a supposedly Hindi speaker (in the sense of speaking the standard Hindi) looks down upon these languages or other varieties of Hindi then the notion of the prestige value of the dialect comes into existence. In most urban centres, the standard Hindi speakers look down upon not only the speakers of the dialects, but at the same time also looks down upon the dialects. This is because they are brought up with the idea that they are more cultured as they speak the standard variety of a language.

When a dialect is associated with a particular social class, it is termed as sociolect. When it is a regional dialect, it is called regiolect or topolect. For example, the language spoken by the elite educated class is not similar to that of the language of the lower, working class. In his study on class difference and language, William Labov examines the way people speak, and says that you can very well understand to which class he or she belongs to. Similarly, while listening to the language of a particular person, you can point out to which region the person belongs to. For example, if you listen to a person in India speaking English, you can make out in most cases, to which region of India he or she belongs to. A south Indian person has a different accent of English than a Bengali English speaking man. However, accent or pronunciation is only one of the aspect in which a dialect differs from another dialect. A dialect is also distinguished by its vocabulary, grammar, and phonology, including prosody.

### Dialect or language—No universal criteria

There seems to be no universally accepted criterion for distinguishing a language from a dialect. Different scholars and linguists suggest different measures, but they often lead to contradictory results. There are some linguists who do not want to differentiate between languages and dialects, that is, languages are dialects and vice versa. There are some who think that language and dialect should be used separately. Thus, there is a major disagreement in the distinction and depends on the user's frame of reference. However, it can be said that the term dialect always suggests a relation among languages: if language A is called a dialect, this implies that the speaker considers A as a dialect of some other language B, which then usually is some standard language.

It can further be added that language varieties are often called dialects rather than language. They are termed so because of the following reasons:

- They have no standard or codified form
- The speakers of the given language do not have a state of their own
- They are rarely or never used in writing (outside reported speech)
- They lack prestige with respect to standardized variety

Anthropological linguists try to define dialect as the specific form of a language used by a speech community. In other words, the difference between language and dialect is the difference between the abstract or general and the concrete and particular. From this perspective, no one speaks a 'language.' Everyone speaks a dialect of a language. Often, the standard language is the dialect (sociolect) of the elite class.

Linguists do not study linguistics per se merely from the point of view of language. They also give importance to the socio-political and cultural factors that determine the use of a particular language by a community and the use of the language by individuals. Linguists focus on the aspect of the modern nation-state as a significant determiner of the way the language policies and planning are done. This difference affects the way you perceive it to be a language or a dialect.

It is widely believed that the notion of the modern nation state was developed in Europe since the French Revolution which made the distinction between 'language' and 'dialect'. Western nations are built on the theoretical premise that they achieved their unity as a nation on the basis of either or few or all of the following criteria: linguistic unity, cultural cohesiveness, and same religion or cut off from rest of the last by some geographical boundary. It is necessary to keep in mind that in case of India, none of these parameters work. This is because India is a multi-lingual, multicultural state having diverse religions. The diversity of the land gives it a plurality of its own and the linguistic diversity is peculiar of its kind where there are at least 1,652 languages existing within the boundaries of India.

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When we came together as a nation, it was meant for a different reason. However, the linguistic diversity in India has created political problems for India often. Whenever a linguistic community or a speech community figured out that their language and culture is threatened by the dominant group, there is a rebellion. Sometimes, it arises in the manner of asking for regional autonomy or for demanding a separate nation. A group speaking a separate language is often seen as having a greater claim to being a separate people or a nation. A group speaking a dialect tends to be seen not as 'a people' in its own right. The distinction between language and dialect is thus, made at least as much on a political basis as on a linguistic one, and can lead to great political controversy, or even armed conflict.

However, the question of deciding the status of a language or a dialect based on the view of the modern nation state is doubted by many linguists. The historical linguists try to approach dialect from the language (parent language) from which it evolved or developed. From this point of view, the modern Romance languages are dialects of Latin. Modern Greek is a dialect of ancient Greek, Tok Piskin is a dialect of English. This paradigm is not entirely problem-free. This approach gives paramount importance to genetic relationships between languages. But this approach also has its own pitfalls as a language may develop from another language or dialect. It can diversify to such an extent to be mutually unintelligible over a period of time. Some languages or dialects may change widely, others may not. Those languages may again be subdivided into more languages or dialects. The following language tree of Indo-European languages (Figure 12.1) may make us understand it in a better fashion how language evolved from a parent language.

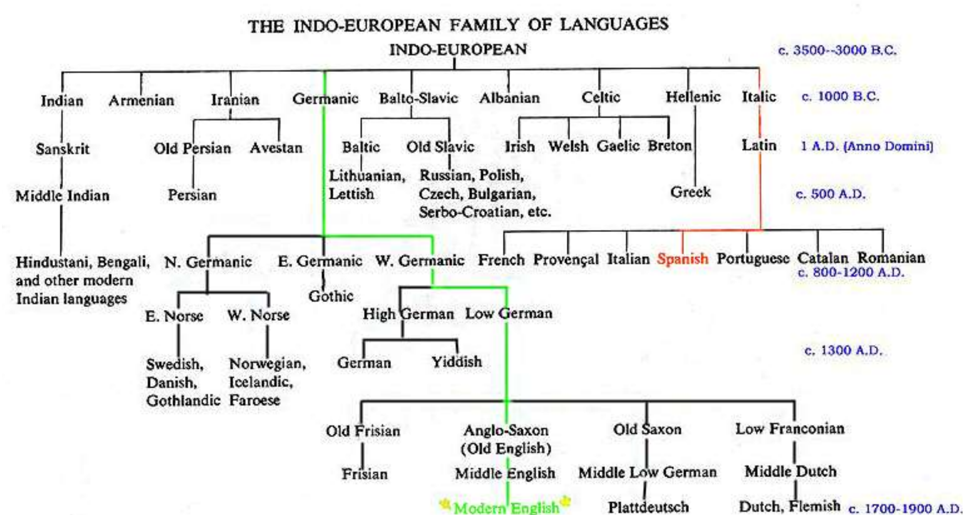



*Fig. 12.1 The Indo-European Family of Languages*

For example, almost all north Indian languages have evolved from the parent language, Sanskrit. Therefore, in some cases, one finds that there are many similarities between the languages of North India and in many cases there are too many differences to make two languages of North India mutually unintelligible to each other.

**Check Your Progress**

3. What did William Labov investigate in his classic work *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*?
4. Who coined the term 'idiolect'?
5. Why are language varieties known as dialects rather than languages?

## 12.4 MAJOR BRANCHES OF LINGUISTICS

These are different branches of linguistics into which the modern linguistics has spread. Linguistics as a subject or a discipline is not theoretically concerned with the dry realm of language and its scientific study anymore.

### 12.4.1 Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics can be said to be dealing with an understanding of language in terms of its acquisition as well as production. It is a multi-disciplinary realm of studies which deals with psychology, linguistics, anthropology, neuroscience, and computer science. Some psycholinguists also extended the realm of this area of study to non-human language, for example of gorillas and chimpanzees, to understand language as human phenomena is a much better way. Some of the early developments in this field are:

- The term was coined in 1936 by Jaco Robert Kantor in his book *An Objective Psychology of Grammar*.
- In 1946 article 'Language and psycholinguistics: a review', the term was popularized by Kantor's student Nicholas Henry Pronko.
- Later in 1954, the book *Psycholinguistics: A Survey of Theory and Research Problems*, by Charles E Osgood and Thomas A. Sebeok was published. It is an important addition to this field.

In general, psycholinguistics decodes how a human brain acquires language, processes it, comprehends it and gives feedback or produces language.

### 12.4.2 Sociolinguistics

Human Beings are distinct from other animals as they can use language in a creative way to express themselves. It is not that animals do not have language of their

own, they do; but human beings use words to communicate with each other. Thus, language becomes one of the important markers of human identity. Language is not only a means of communication but also serves the purpose of the carrier of our culture. Thus, one of the aspects of linguistic study that deals with the study of language vis-a-vis society is sociolinguistics. The main concern of sociolinguistics is to examine the way that a complex relationship exists between language and society. In other words, it can be said that sociolinguistics is a meeting ground for linguists and social scientists, anthropologists and others. What the socio-linguist primarily studies is the variable nature of language. The premise from where they undertake their work is that language is not a static entity, but a dynamic one. Because of the dynamic quality of language there are lots of varieties of language. Variation in language and language use happens for various reasons such as geographical separation, sex, age, education, social background, class, caste etc. and these variations can be studied at various levels such as phonological, morphological, syntactical, semantic and others.

If we take the example of India, within the span of Indian territory there are about 1652 languages spoken, which only points out to the linguistic diversity of our land. But, it is not only that there are these many languages, but at the same time one has to keep in mind that these languages are used in different settings by different individuals in different ways. For example, a Bhojpuri man may use his Bhojpuri at home, but when he is in a formal setting he would prefer to use standard Hindi, and if he knows English then he may use that in a much more formal setting. He may even mix the two languages while speaking to friends, while when he writes he may be using any one of the three languages but his language will be much more formal. Thus in different setting, according to the listener or some other parameter he may choose to use different language Sociolinguistics studies this aspect of language variation in detail.

Sociolinguistics is a meeting ground for linguists and social scientists, anthropologists and others. What the socio-linguist primarily studies is the variable nature of language. The premise from where they undertake their work is that language is not a static entity, but a dynamic one. Because of the dynamic quality of language there are lots of varieties of language. Sociolinguistics studies this aspect of language variation in detail. Apart from studying language variation per se, sociolinguistics also studies how language becomes the marker of one's identity – whether class identity, gender identity, or group identity, national identity etc. Whereas all of us are different in our use of language, in the sense that we all use language in different ways yet it is language which binds us together. Language makes our individual identity at the same time it marks our group identity. Language is also a tool which is significant in different spheres of social life such as education, religion, media, and administration. Language is also a tool of domination. These are also spheres which come under the domain of sociolinguistics.

*Box 12.1*
**Some definitions of socio-linguistics**

There are several possible relationships between language and society. One is that social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behavior. . . .A second possible relationship is directly opposed to the first: linguistic structure and/or behavior may either influence or determine social structure. . . . A third possible relationship is that the influence is bi-directional: language and society may influence each other. . . .Whatever sociolinguistics is . . . any conclusions we come to must be solidly based on evidence.

R. Wardhaugh

P. Trudgill (1974): 'Sociolinguistics.. is that part of linguistics which is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. It investigates the field of language and society & has close connections with the social sciences, especially social psychology, anthropology, human geography and sociology.'

Peter Trudgill (1983: 2-5), *On Dialect*:

[*Trudgill uses 'language and society' as the broadest term, and distinguishes 3 types of study:*]

1. "First, those where the objectives are purely linguistic;
2. Second, those where they are partly linguistic and partly sociological; and
3. Third, those where the objectives are wholly sociological.

"Studies of [the first] type are based on empirical work on language as it is spoken in its social context, and are intended to answer questions and deal with topics of central interest to linguistics... the term 'sociolinguistics' [here]... is being used principally to refer to a methodology: sociolinguistics as a way of doing linguistics.

"The 2nd category... includes [areas] such as: sociology of language; the social psychology of language; anthropological linguistics; the ethnography of speaking; & [interactional] discourse analysis.

"The third category consists of studies... [like] ethno-methodological studies of conversational interaction... where language data is being employed to tell us, not about language but only about society... [This] is fairly obviously not linguistics, and therefore not sociolinguistics."

Wm. Downes (1984: 15), *Language and Society*:

"Sociolinguistics is that branch of linguistics which studies just those properties of language and languages which REQUIRE reference to social, including contextual, factors in their explanation."

Janet Holmes (1992, 16), *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics:*

"The sociolinguist's aim is to move towards a theory which provides a motivated account of the way language is used in a community, and of the choices people make when they use language."

J. K. Chambers (1995, 203), *Sociolinguistic Theory*:

"Upon observing variability, we seek its social correlates. What is the purpose of this variation? What do its variants symbolize? … [These] are the central questions of sociolinguistics."

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Ronald Wardhaugh (1998, 10-11), *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction*:

"[1] Social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behavior… [2] Linguistic structure and/or behavior may either influence or determine social structure [Whorf, Bernstein]… [3] The influence is bi-directional: language and society may influence each other… [4] There is no relationship at all between linguistic structure and social structure… each is independent of the other… [4a] Although there might be some such relationship, present attempts to characterize it are essentially premature… this view appears to be the one that Chomsky holds."

Florian Coulmas (1997), *Handbook of Sociolinguistics "Introduction" (1-11)*

"The primary concern of sociolinguistic scholarship is to study correlations between language use and social structure… It attempts to establish causal links between language and society, [asking] what language contributes to making community possible & how communities shape their languages by using them… [It seeks] a better understanding of language as a necessary condition and product of social life… Linguistic theory is… a theory about language without human beings."

### 12.4.3 Computational Linguistics

Computational linguistics is a field that ranges between linguistics and computer science with the help of psychology and logic; again it is an interdisciplinary field of study which emphasizes on using computers to understand and deal with linguistic issues (McGuigan, 2006). Martin Kay (2003) is of the opinion that this field of study perhaps first began in 1949 with machine translation. The phrase 'computational linguistics' began to be used in 1965 when it appeared as a sub-title of the journal 'Mechanical Translation and Computational Linguistics'. There are two aspects to it:

- To apply the experience of computer science to the study of linguistics
- Their experience of linguistics to computer science so that computers can understand everyday human language and translation. (Wintner, 2004)

Computational linguistics ranges between cognitive sciences and artificial intelligence. Applied computational linguistics is meant to devise program which can improve the interaction between human and machine so that human and computers can communicate easily.

### 12.4.4 Historical Linguistics

Historical Linguistics deals with the study of language as it evolves over a historical period of time. For example, from the Middle Age (Chaucer) to modern day, the change that has occurred in the English language will be a subject matter of historical linguistics. It is thought to be the oldest field of linguistics–a field which was much in practice in the nineteenth century when the emphasis is laid on the study of common ancestry of humankind through tracing language to a historical past to a proto-language. Today we see that there is emphasis on Indo-European proto-language from which most of the European as well as Indian languages supposedly

arrived. Though in the twentieth century there has been a change in perspective after the advent of Ferdinand de Saussure who emphasized on synchronic study of language rather than diachronic (historical) studies. Today Synchronic study of language is much in fashion, though historical studies have not gone irrelevant as Philology is still a very significant field of linguistics.

**Check Your Progress**

6. Who coined the term 'psycholinguistics'?
7. Name the journal in which the term 'computation linguistics' first appeared?

## 12.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Language is thought to be arbitrary in the sense that there is no inherent relation between the words (morphs) of a language and their meanings or the ideas conveyed by them.
2. Ferdinand de Saussure is the author of *A Course in General Linguistics.*
3. William Labov investigated the sound 'r' in his work *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. His hypothesis was that the pronunciation of 'r' by New York City speakers varies according to the social class that they belong to.
4. Idiolect was a term coined by linguist Bernard Bloch.
5. Language varieties are often called dialects rather than language. They are termed so because of the following reasons:
   - They have no standard or codified form
   - The speakers of the given language do not have a state of their own
   - They are rarely or never used in writing (outside reported speech)
   - They lack prestige with respect to standardized variety
6. The term 'psycholinguistics' was coined in 1936 by Jaco Robert Kantor in his book *An Objective Psychology of Grammar.*
7. The phrase 'computational linguistics' appeared as a sub-title of the journal 'Mechanical Translation and Computational Linguistics' in 1965.

## 12.6 SUMMARY

- Language has many characteristics, but the following are the most important ones: language is arbitrary, productive, creative, systematic, vocalic, social, non-instinctive and conventional. These characteristics of language set human language apart from animal communication.

- Arbitrariness is one of the most significant features of human language. Language is thought to be arbitrary in the sense that there is no inherent relation between the words (morphs) of a language and their meanings or the ideas conveyed by them.
- Language is social as it is a medium of communication among members of a particular community.
- Language is not only used for speaking, but also for the purposes of writing. For each sound or combination of sounds in a particular language a corresponding symbol are employed to demote its meaning. These symbols are arbitrarily chosen (similar to the way sounds are chosen arbitrarily) and conventionally accepted and employed.
- Every language is a system of systems. All languages have phonological and grammatical systems, and within a system there are several sub-systems.
- Language is primarily made up of vocal sounds only produced by a physiological articulatory mechanism in the human body.
- Language is the outcome of evolution and convention. Each generation transmits this convention on to the next. Like all human institutions languages also change and die, grow and expand. Every language then is a convention in a community. It is non-instinctive because it is acquired by human beings.
- Language has creativity and productivity. The structural elements of human language can be combined to produce new utterances, which neither the speaker nor his hearers may ever have made or heard before; yet both sides understand each other without difficulty.
- In variation studies, Noam Chomsky, a famous linguist and a political thinker of the twentieth century, makes a significant distinction between competence and performance. According to him, competence is the ideal speaker-hearer's knowledge of his or her language. Performance refers to the specific utterances, including grammatical mistakes and non-linguistic features. It includes hesitations that accompany the use of language.
- William Labov's classic work *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* explored how language changes or varies with the variation of class, age and gender. He investigated the sound 'r' in New York City. His hypothesis was that the pronunciation of 'r' by New York City speakers varies according to the social class that they belong to.
- Idiolect is a term coined by linguist Bernard Bloch to mean a variety of language which is unique to an individual. The term is not so easy to define as there are at least two claims about the relationship between idiolects and language, and are as follows:
    - o Idiolects are defined as deviations from a common standard, deviations from a language intended as a social institution or convention (thesis of the priority of language over idiolects).

  - o A language is defined as the result of the way individuals use linguistic expressions in different contexts (thesis of the priority of idiolects over language).
- The term dialect has its origin from the Greek Language word *dialektos*. On one hand, dialect refers to a particular variety of a language that is a characteristic of a particular group of that language's speakers. On the other hand, it refers to a variety of language which is supposedly socially subordinate to a regional or national standard language.
- There are some linguists who do not want to differentiate between languages and dialects, that is, languages are dialects and vice versa. There are some who think that language and dialect should be used separately. Thus, there is a major disagreement in the distinction and depends on the user's frame of reference.
- These are different branches of linguistics into which the modern linguistics has spread. They are psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, computational linguistics and historical linguistics.
- Psycholinguistics can be said to be dealing with an understanding of language in terms of its acquisition as well as production. It is a multi-disciplinary realm of studies which deals with psychology, linguistics, anthropology, neuroscience, and computer science.
- One of the aspects of linguistic study that deals with the study of language vis-avis society is sociolinguistics. The main concern of sociolinguistics is to examine the way that a complex relationship exists between language and society.
- Computational linguistics is a field that ranges between linguistics and computer science with the help of psychology and logic; again it is an interdisciplinary field of study which emphasizes on using computers to understand and deal with linguistic issues (McGuigan, 2006).
- Historical Linguistics deals with the study of language as it evolves over a historical period of time.

## 12.7 KEY WORDS

- **Competence:** It is the ideal speaker-hearer's knowledge of his or her language.
- **Performance**: It refers to the specific utterances of a speaker, including grammatical mistakes and non-linguistic features.
- **Parole:** It is the individual way of speaking or using language which is very personalized and idiosyncratic.

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- **Sociolinguistics:** It is the study of the complex relationship between language and society.
- **Philology:** It is the historical study of language.

## 12.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. State the characteristics of language that sets in apart from animal communication.
2. What are the criticisms levied against William Labov for his study on New York City?
3. Define idiolects.
4. Write a short note on Sociolinguistics.
5. What is computational linguistics?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Examine the difference between competence and performance.
2. Discuss the design features of language as put forward by Charles F. Hockett.
3. Explain the arguments regarding the distinction between dialects and languages.
4. Examine the different branches of linguistics.

## 12.9 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

Wrenn, C.L. 1977. *The English Language.* London: Methuen Publishing.

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# UNIT 13 TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR AND BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS

**Structure**



## 13.0 INTRODUCTION

Traditional grammar refers to the prescriptive rules and concepts about structure of language that were taught prior to the beginning of modern linguistics. It is basically the grammar that still continues to be taught in schools. Structural grammar, on the other hand, aims to explain the working of language in terms of its components and the interrelationship between them. The method used for this purpose is the IC Analysis wherein sentences are divided into layers or constituents, until, in the final layer, each constituent consists of only a word or meaningful part of a word. Other approaches of grammar include P.S. grammar and T.G. grammar. In Phase Structure (P.S.) Grammar, constituent structures are represented by phrase structure rules or rewrite rules. Transformational (T.G.) Grammar system of language is an analysis that recognizes the relationship among the various elements of a sentence and among the possible sentences of a language and uses processes or rules to express these relationships. In this unit, these concepts have been discussed in detail.

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## 13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the evolution of traditional grammar
- Analyse basic sentence patterns and the structural view of grammar
- Discuss the concepts of Phrase Structure (P.S.) Grammar and Transformational (T.G.) Grammar
- Describe the concepts of competence, language acquisition and others

## 13.2 TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR

Traditional grammar refers to the type of grammar study done prior to the beginnings of modern linguistics. Grammar, in this traditional sense, is the study of the structure and formation of words and sentences, usually without much reference to sound and meaning. In the more modern linguistic sense, grammar is the study of the entire interrelated system of structures—sounds, words, meanings, sentences—within a language.

Traditional grammar can be traced back over 2,000 years and includes grammars from the classical period of Greek, India, and Rome; the Middle Ages; the Renaissance; the 18th and 19th century; and more modern times. The grammars created in this tradition reflect the prescriptive view that one dialect or variety of a language is to be valued more highly than others and should be the norm for all speakers of the language. Traditional grammars include prescriptive rules that are to be followed and proscriptive rules of usage to be avoided. 'When describing an emotion, use of an English word descended from Latin is preferred over an Anglo-Saxon word' is an example of a prescriptive rule, and 'Never split an infinitive' is an example of a proscriptive rule.

The analytical study of language began around 500 BC in Greece and India. The work of Greek scholar Dionysius Thrax is the model for all grammars of European languages that follow. His *Hç grammátikç tékhnç* (c. 100 BC; The Art of Letters) was the first widely recognized text to provide a curriculum for learning proper Greek. His lessons included an introduction to the alphabet, lessons on how to join syllables together properly, and instruction in the appreciation of word arrangement (syntax). To Thrax, grammar was the technical knowledge necessary to produce the prestige language of poets, orators, and writers.

Around the same time, the Roman scholar Marcus Terentius Varro produced the 25 volumes of his *De lingua latina* (c. 100, about the Latin Language). Varro contrasted Latin with Greek, changed Greek grammatical terms into Latin, and formed his grammar of Latin by adapting Greek rules.

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Other Latin grammars, influenced by the works of Thrax and Varro, were produced in the Middle Ages. Aelius Donatus published *Ars Grammatica* (c. fourth century, Art of Letters), and Donat Priscianus Caesariensis (Priscian) wrote *Institutiones grammaticae* (c. sixth century, Grammatical Foundations), which is the only complete surviving Latin grammar.

As printing became more widely available in the Renaissance, European grammarians began the mass production of grammars of their languages by mirroring the Latin grammars of Varro, Donatus, and Priscian. These traditional grammarians presumed that the grammatical descriptions of Latin could be routinely applied to their own languages; this perception, however, was not accurate and resulted in many artificial prescriptive and proscriptive rules. Many of these false assumptions still carry over to attitudes about English today.

Continuing with this tradition, grammarians in the 18th century studied English, along with many other European languages by using the prescriptive approach in traditional grammar; during this time alone, over 270 grammars of English were published. During most of the 18th and 19th centuries, grammar was viewed as the art or science of correct language in both speech and writing. By pointing out common mistakes in usage, these early grammarians created grammars and dictionaries to help settle usage arguments and to encourage the improvement of English.

One of the most influential grammars of the 18th century was Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* (1794), which was updated in new editions for decades. Murray's rules were taught for many years throughout school systems in England and the United States and helped to create modern attitudes about the existence of a correct or standard variety of English. Murray's grammar represents a practice that continued to develop throughout the 19th century and was still dominant in the 1960s when linguistics began to focus more on generative and transformational grammar due to Noam Chomsky's groundbreaking and influential ideas.

Even though linguists today view traditional grammar as an unscientific way to study language and grammar, many of the basic Latin-based notions of grammar can still be found in all levels of the classroom and in textbooks and usage guides available to educators and the public. Traditional grammar books usually provide lists of grammatical terms, definitions of those terms, and advice on using so-called 'standard' grammar, including suggested correct usage of punctuation, spelling, and word choice. This advice is usually based on the prescriptive rules of prestige varieties of English, varieties often only able to be used by those in power either economically or politically.

Linguists, along with many English faculty, would rather have students study language with a descriptive approach that includes the analysis of real samples of a mixture of English dialect varieties, not just the prescribed, and sometimes inconsistent, prestige forms. Linguists or teachers using a descriptive approach

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say that it allows students to investigate language on a deeper level, enabling students to see the system at work, instead of teaching them isolated prescriptive and proscriptive rules based on Latin, a dead language no longer in flux as English constantly is.

Linguists also believe that the rules of traditional grammar are inadequate because many of the rules are oversimplified, inconsistent, or not consistently conformed to. The grammars of classical Greece and Rome were based on the best orators or poets of the day. However, the best poets or speakers of our day are lauded for their poetic use of language that breaks prescriptive rules. For example, a traditional grammar rule of modern English, often found in usage guides and student handbooks, forbids the use of fragment sentences like 'The train running up the hill.' However, E.E. Cummings or Maya Angelou could use this sentence for poetic effect without question.

Many teachers themselves want to be trained in traditional grammar, even though its inconsistencies may not help them when they have to explain grammatical points to their students. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requires that teachers in training take linguistics or language courses to teach them to examine the differences between traditional grammar and more modern grammars. However, many English teachers view traditional grammar as necessary and newer grammars as little help to them. And even though more modern types of grammatical analysis exist, many students, future teachers, and the general public still believe grammar means the traditional Latin-based grammar of old.

**Check Your Progress**

1. What view do grammars created in the classical tradition reflect?
2. What does Murray's grammar represent?

## 13.3 BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS

It is a grammatical norm that an English sentence has two parts – a subject and a verb that express a complete thought when they are together.

- The subject shows who or what is doing the action. It is always some form of noun or pronoun.
- The verb shows the action or the state of being. It can be an action verb, like 'run', or a state verb, like 'seem'.

Examples of simple two-word sentences include:

- He slept.
- Dogs ran.
- I studied.

Though sentences can be this short, but real sentences are rarely so short. We usually want to convey much more information, so we modify the main subject and verb with other words and phrases, as in the sentences below:

- Unfortunately, he slept early.
- Dogs ran faster than us.
- I studied for hours.

Despite the extra information, each of these sentences has one subject and one verb, so it's still just one clause.

**What's a clause?**

A clause is the combination of a subject and a verb. When you have a subject and verb, you have a clause.

1. **Independent clause:** a subject and verb that make a complete thought. Independent clauses are called independent because they can stand on their own and make sense.
2. **Dependent clause:** a subject and verb that don't make a complete thought. Dependent clauses always need to be attached to an independent clause (they're too weak to stand alone).

Before we move on to the sentence types, you should know a little trick of subjects and verbs: they can double up in the same clause. These are called "compound" subjects or verbs because there are two or more of them in the same clause.

Compound subject (two subjects related to the same verb):

- Seema and his colleagues collaborated for the research.

Compound verb (two verbs related to the same subject):

- Seema conducted the experiment and documented the results.

**Compound subject with compound verb**

- Seema, her colleagues, and their advisor drafted and revised the research report several times.

Notice that they don't overlap. You can tell that it's only one clause because all the subjects in one clause come before all the verbs in the same clause.

**Four Basic Patterns of Sentences**

Every sentence pattern below describes a different way to combine clauses. As nouns can fill so many positions in a sentence, it's easier to analyze sentence patterns by finding the verbs and the connectors.

In the descriptions below, S = Subject and V = Verb, and options for arranging the clauses in each sentence pattern given in parentheses. Connecting

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words and the associated punctuation are highlighted in brown. Notice how the punctuation changes with each arrangement.

**Pattern 1: Simple Sentence**

One independent clause (SV.)

- Mr. Ram teaches well.

**Pattern 2: Compound Sentence**

Two or more independent clauses. They can be arranged in these ways:

- (SV, and SV.) or (SV; however, SV.)
- **Connectors with a comma:** for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
- **Connectors with a semicolon and comma:** however, moreover, nevertheless, nonetheless, therefore

**Example:**

- Mr. Ram teaches well, but he does not entertain too many questions.

**Pattern 3: Complex Sentence**

A Complex sentence has one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. They can be arranged in these ways: (SV because SV.) or (Because SV, SV.) or (S, because SV, V.)

Connectors are always at the beginning of the dependent clause. They show how the dependent clause is related to the independent clause. This list shows different types of relationships along with the connectors that indicate those relationships:

- **Cause/Effect:** because, since, so that
- **Comparison/Contrast:** although, even though, though, whereas, while
- **Place/Manner:** where, wherever, how, however
- **Possibility/Conditions:** if, whether, unless
- **Relation:** that, which, who, whom
- **Time:** after, as, before, since, when, whenever, while, until

Example of complex sentence:

- Although Mr. Ram teaches well, he never gives any value to the questions asked to him.

**Pattern 4: Compound-Complex Sentence**

Compound-Complex sentences have two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. They can be arranged in these ways: (SV, and SV because SV.) or (Because SV, SV, but SV.)

**Example:**

Although Mr. Ram teaches well and inspires students to perform well, he never gives any value to the questions asked to him.

## 13.4 STRUCTURAL VIEW OF GRAMMAR

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913, born in Geneva), considered the 'father of modern linguistics', studied Sanskrit and comparative linguistics in Geneva, Paris, and Leipzig. In 1878, at the age of 21, Saussure published a long and bright article, 'Note on the Primitive System of the Indo-European Vowels', which established his credential as a young scholar. Saussure's influence on linguists was far-reaching, through his direct influence on his students at the University of Geneva. They practically worshipped him. His teachings are spread through his ideas which were collected and disseminated after his death by two of his students, Charles Bally and Albert Sechaye. These students, who became well-known linguistic researchers in their own right, put together course notes from their and another student's notebooks. They produced the *Cours de Linguistique Generale* (Course in General Linguistics). This composite work, shaped and interpreted by Bally and Sechaye, was prepared in the years immediately following Saussure's death. It was a tribute and was seen as a way of making his brilliant ideas accessible beyond Geneva for posterity. It did well and the *Cours de Linguistique Generale* was widely read in French by scholars all over Europe. In 1959, it was translated into English by Wade Baskin mainly for American students, who were less likely to have learned to read French than their European counterparts. A new translation of the *Cours de Linguistique Generale* by Roy Harris appeared in 1986.

Saussure's fresh ideas were consonant with those of his influential compatriot, Claude Levi-Strauss, and also those of Emile Durkheim, the pioneer of the new field of sociology. Saussure's influence spread all through the new social sciences in the early and mid-twentieth century, and ultimately, for better or worse, to literary theory and modern cultural studies. They still exert a very strong intellectual force in all these disciplines (probably most in linguistics and the disciplines most influenced by literary theory; less so now in traditional anthropology, sociology, and psychology). In linguistics, Saussure's focus on the synchronic dimension and on language as an interrelated system of elements was maintained through the American Structuralist period (Bloomfield, Hockett). It was extended to the generative period (Chomsky, Bresnan). His view of the essential nature of the form-meaning pairing, without the intermediate and essentially meaningless syntactic layer posited by Chomsky, Perlmutter, and other generative theory-builders, has re-emerged in theories like head-driven phrase structure grammar (Sag and Pollard) and construction grammar.

Modern functionalist theories have integrated diachrony much more than generative theories (cf. the functional typology of Greenberg, Givón, Comrie, Heine,

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and Bybee), but the focus on the synchronic has nevertheless been essentially maintained in modern cognitive theories of language. It keeps in with the synchronic view of the human mind in the cognitive sciences, notably psychology and neuroscience.

### Key ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure

Ferdinand de Saussure lost faith in philology (the study of the historical development of languages) and the historical (or diachronic*)* study of language. He argued for structurally studying language as it exists as a system at a particular point in time (synchronically). This feature of Sassurean linguistics is taken by structuralists to study any given text or cultural practice from a synchronic perspective.

### Synchronic and Diachronic Studies

As against the historical view of language, Ferdinand de Saussure emphasized the importance of studying language from two distinct points of view, which he called 'synchronic' and 'diachronic'. The word 'chronic' was derived from Greek word 'chronos' and means time. While synchronic linguistics sees language as a living whole, existing as a state at a particular point in time, diachronic linguistics considers language in its historical development (Greek dia-through, chronos-time). Saussure says:

> Synchronic linguistics will concern the logical and psychological relations that bind together co-existing terms and from a system in the collective mind of speakers. Diachronic linguistics, on the contrary, will study relations that bind together successive terms, not perceived by the collective mind but substituted for each other without forming a system.

Thus, synchronic linguistics deals with systems whereas diachronic with units. The relationship between the both aspects of language study was diagrammatically represented as follows in Figure 13.1.

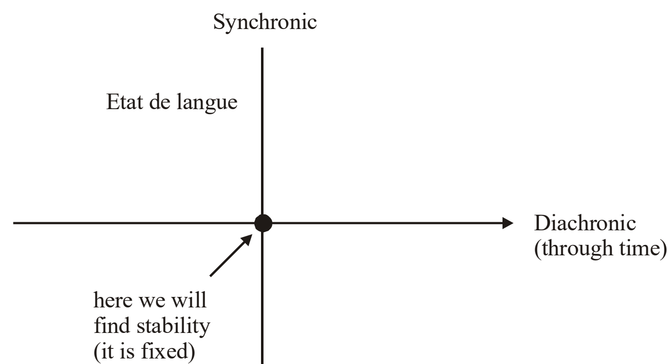



***Fig. 13.1*** *The Relationship between Synchronic and Diachronic Linguistics*

You have to keep in mind that it is impossible to consider the way a language has changed from one state to another without first knowing something about the two states to be compared. This need not be a pair of complete synchronic descriptions. It is raised as complaint with regard to what linguists actually do in

practice. However, some non-historical analysis is essential in the preliminary course of analysis. Saussure rounds off his discussion with various analogies. His analogy with a game of chess is perhaps the most famous of all. If we walk into a room while a game of chess is being played, it is possible to assess the state of the game by simply studying the position of the pieces on the board (as long as we know the rules): we do not normally need to know the previous moves from the beginning of the game. And likewise, the state of board at every move is implicit in any pattern of play we may wish to study. The synchronic/diachronic distinction, Saussure claims, is very similar to this analogy.

Saussure's distinction between diachronic and synchronic studies of the language is a distinction between two opposing viewpoints. You have to keep in mind that a good diachronic work is usually based on good synchronic work because no valid statement about linguistic change can be made unless you have good synchronic work of the languages across the time in which the diachronic work is being done.

### Langue and Parole

Saussure divided language into three levels: (i) language, the human capacity to evolve sign systems, (ii) langue, the system of language that is the rules and conventions which organize it, and (iii) parole, any individual utterance or the individual's use of language. Saussure was chiefly interested in langue as a historical phenomenon. For Saussure, as Roland Barthes describes it, langue is 'essentially a collective contract which one must accept in its entirety if one wishes to communicate.' In other words, it can be said that langue is the structure of a language at a given point of time and parole is the performance of a speaker of that language (Figure 13.2).

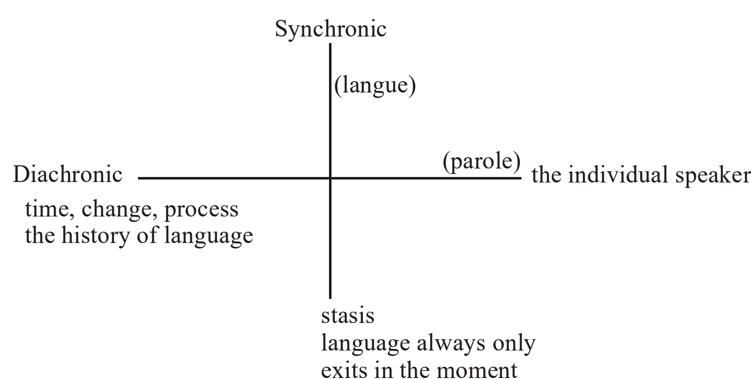



***Fig. 13.2*** *The Levels of Language*

Saussure also made a categorical distinction between langue and parole. Langue formed the subject matter of linguistics, and parole was constituted of all those elements which lay beyond the domain of linguistics. Parole dealt with individual utterance in the sense of how an individual uses a language within the structure of a language (langue). Saussure was deeply influenced by the sociological theories of Durkheim. He considered language to be an abstract body of knowledge

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which all members of society shared collectively and individually. This knowledge of the code, which was encoded in the brain of each individual and which belonged collectively to all the members of society, was considered to be langue.

Individuals used it either by choice or predilection on individual occasions fell in the domain of parole. Therefore, it was of no direct interest to linguistics. This is the basic difference between the two: whereas one is social and a body of abstract knowledge, the other is individual and is perceptible in individual instances. The implication, therefore, is very simple: the stable, predictable, pattered, systematic regularities of language are what linguistics could set out to study. On the other hand, the random, unpredictable, idiosyncratic and wilful individual use of language was not amenable to a scientific analysis and was therefore of no interest to linguistics.

### Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relations

The synchronic system can then be described in terms of two axes: the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic (Figure 13.3). The paradigmatic is concerned with meaning based on association, and the syntagmatic is based on combination. The paradigmatic is concerned with the 'fixed' value of signs based on their immediate associations with other signs (like the association of the sound/idea 'large' with other size notions such as 'small', as well as with other sound images, such as 'barge'). On the other hand, the syntagmatic is concerned with the 'dynamic', pertaining to meaning conferred by the combination, order and sequence of signs.

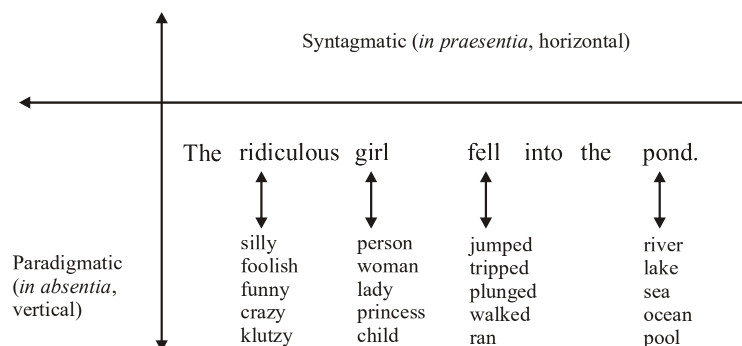



***Fig. 13.3*** *Two Axes of the Synchronic System*

The relationship between the words in syntagmatic arena in the sentence 'the ridiculous girl fell into the pond' is the relationship where the words are combined together to produce a meaning, where we have the word order of SVO (subject–object–verb). Further, we have each word define a relationship with the other words. But each word in this sentence can be substituted with other words, as given in the diagram above to make an infinite number of sentences having different meanings. This realm of substitution is termed by Saussure as paradigmatic. The relationship between the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic is analogous to that between the synchronic and diachronic, in that the former is like a snapshot of

related values, and the latter offers a trajectory where value is related to the sequence or progression. The paradigmatic sense is structuralism's primary concern, and it is more readily systematizable, although a consideration of both (and the correlations between them) is essential for any structuralist analysis.

### Signifier and Signified

In Saussure's view, words are not symbols which 'refer' to things, but are 'signs' which are made up of two parts. They comprise a sound pattern (either written or spoken) called a 'signifier', and a concept called a 'signified'. Things have no place in Saussure's model as language does not acquire meaning as the result of some connection between words and things, but only as parts of a system of relations. Saussure says, 'A linguistic system is a series of differences of sounds combined with a series of differences of ideas.' The relationship between the sounds (signifier) and the ideas or concepts it refers to (signified) is arbitrary (Figure 13.4).

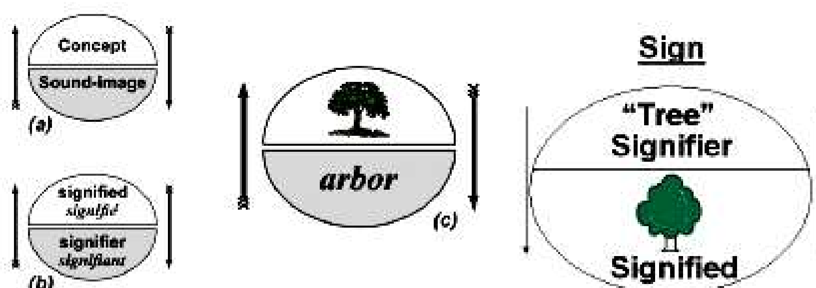



*Fig. 13.4* *The Relationship between the Sounds and the Ideas*

All these significant ideas of Saussure deeply influenced the French scholars of 1950s and 1960s. They started an intellectual movement known as structuralism. The underlying rules of the cultural texts and practices which produce its meaning or signification are what interest the structuralists. The task of the structuralist, in other words, is to figure out the rules and conventions (the structure) of texts and cultural practices which govern the production of meaning (parole).

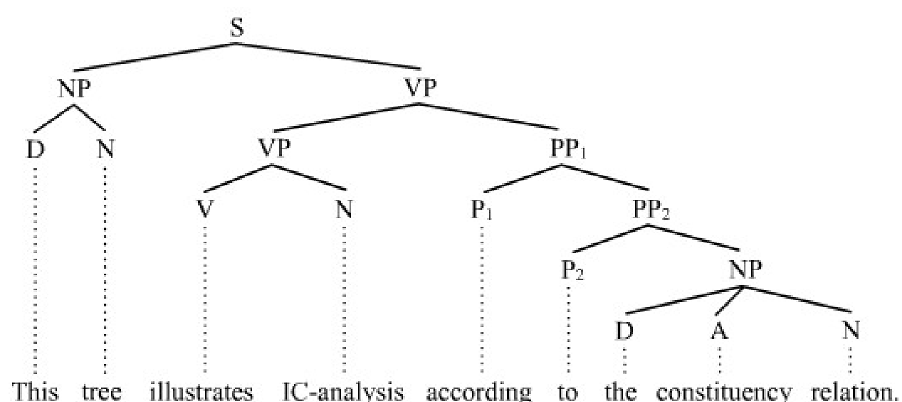
### 13.4.1 IC Analysis

In linguistics, Immediate Constituent analysis or IC analysis is a method of sentence analysis that was first mentioned by Leonard Bloomfield and developed further by Rulon Wells. It was further developed by Noam Chomsky. The process and result of IC-analysis can vary based upon whether one chooses the constituency relation of phrase structure grammars (constituency grammars) or the dependency relation of dependency grammars as the underlying principle that organizes constituents into hierarchical structures. IC-analysis divides up a sentence into major parts or immediate constituents, and the process continues until irreducible constituents are reached, i.e., until each constituent consists of only a word or a meaningful part of a word. The end result of IC-analysis is often presented in a visual

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diagrammatic form that reveals the hierarchical immediate constituent structure of the sentence at hand.

In the context of the phrase structure grammar (=constituency grammar), IC-analysis divides a sentence into major parts or immediate constituents and these constituents are then divided into further immediate constituents. The process continues until irreducible constituents are reached, i.e. until each constituent consists of only one word or a meaningful part of a word. The end result of IC-analysis is always described in a visual diagrammatic form showing the immediate hierarchical constituent structure of the given sentence. In general such diagrams are trees. For instance:




The tree shows how the whole sentence is first divided into the two immediate constituents of this tree and demonstrates IC-analysis by constituency relationship; these two constituents are then divided into the immediate constituents this and branch, and explain IC-analysis and by constituency relationship; and so forth.

**Check Your Progress**

3. What is an independent clause?
4. With whom were Saussure's ideas consistent?
5. What are the three levels in which Saussure divided language?
6. What is the basic difference between langue and parole?
7. On what basis can the process and result of IC-analysis vary?

## 13.5 P.S. GRAMMAR

Phrase Structure Grammar (PS Grammar) was introduced by Noam Chomsky in ***Syntactic Structures*** (1957). PS Grammar contains a set of rules called PS rules or rewrite rules. A rewrite rule is a replacement rule.

$S \rightarrow NP + VP$

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It means S is to be rewritten as NP plus VP, that is, a sentence consists of a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP). S is the initial symbol and NP and VP are nodes that can be further rewritten.

NP → Det + N

That is, NP can be rewritten as a determiner plus a noun.

VP → Aux + V + NP + Prep Ph

That is, VP can be rewritten as an auxiliary plus a verb plus a noun phrase plus a prepositional phrase.

For example,

For the sentence 'A boy was going to the market.' the phase structure will be –

S → NP + VP

NP → Det + N

VP → Aux + V + Prep Ph

The representation of the structure of a sentence is called its Phrase Marker or P Marker. The usual form of a P Marker is a tree with labelled nodes.

Every node in a tree where there is a branch is called a branching node and one without any branch is called a non-branching node. A node that can be further rewritten is a non-terminal node. A node that cannot be further rewritten is a terminal node.

**Phrase Structure (PS) Rules**

PS Rules describe how syntactic categories/phrases combine to form larger constituents in a given language.

**A selection of PS Rules of English**

**Sentence/Clause-level PS Rules (English has quite a fixed clause-level PS Rule)**

1. S → NP VP (a sentence is obligatorily comprised of a NP and a VP)

   *[NP The students] [VP attended their lectures].*

   But some sentences also contain an auxiliary:

2. S → NP Aux VP

   The students will take exams.

   The auxiliary is optional; we can indicate this with (...).

3. S → NP (Aux) VP

   where ( ) indicates an optional constituent

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**VP-related PS-rules (more variation here)**

4. VP → V
   *talked*
5. VP → V Adv
   *talked loudly*
6. VP → V NP
   *ate their desserts*
7. VP → V NP PP (Adv)
   *put the book on the table (wearily)*
8. VP → V (S)
   *know (the students attended their lectures)*

   So, a VP must contain a verb, but can also contain a lot of other phrases (...):
9. VP → V (NP) (PP)(Adv) (S)

**NP-related PS-rules (lots of options)**

10. NP → N
    books
11. NP → Adj N
    unopened books
12. NP → Det Adj N
    the unopened books
13. NP → Det Adj N PP
    the unopened books on the table

    So, NP must contain N but can also contain a lot of other phrases
14. NP → (Det) (Adj) N (PP)

We will discuss phrase structure grammar later on in the unit.

## 13.6 T.G. GRAMMAR

Transformational grammar is in contrast with traditional grammar. Traditional grammar is based on set of rules followed since ages. It defines how a language ought to be used, but transformational language shows how a language is really used by society. According to it, language is dynamic; it keeps changing; it is in a state of flux. The scholars concerned with transformational grammar believe that a native speaker possesses four basic grammatical abilities such as synonymity, missing elements in a sentence, ambiguity and ungrammatical string. They recognize

such things in a sentence. There is always a difference between the origin of language and its form. The following are the grammatical abilities:

- **Missing element:** 'He did not attend the class because he did not want to'. (In this sentence some part of the sentence is missing)
- **Ambiguity:** 'Visiting relatives is a kind of nuisance'. (In this sentence, meaning is ambiguous whether to visit relatives or relatives who visit is a kind of nuisance)
- **Ungrammatic string:** 'Pleasant the weather is'. (Structure is not followed in this sentence).
- **Synonmity:** 'Advocate (solicitor) pleaded my case'.

### Concept of Generative Grammar

Before we begin considering how this morphological theory within the linguistic model of generative grammar works, we will sketch the background assumptions made by generative grammarians so that we can place the theory of morphology in the wider theoretical context of generative linguistics. The central objective of generative linguistics is to understand the nature of linguistic knowledge and its acquisition by the infants. In the light of this objective, a fundamental question that a theory of word-structure must address is, what kind of information must speakers have about the words of their language in order to use them in utterances? Attempts to answer this question have led to the development of sub-theories of the lexicon (i.e., dictionary) and of morphology.

According to Chomsky, the central goal of linguistic theory is to determine what it is that people know if they know a particular language. Chomsky observes that knowing a language is not simply a matter of being able to manipulate a long list of sentences that have been memorized. Rather, knowing a language involves having the ability to produce and understand a vast (and indeed unlimited) number of utterances of that language that one may never have heard or produced before. In other words, creativity (also called productivity or open-endedness) is an aspect of linguistic knowledge that is of paramount importance.

Linguistic creativity is for the most part rule-governed. For instance, speakers of English know that it is possible to indicate that there is more than one entity referred to by a noun and that the standard way of doing this is to add -s at the end of a noun. Given the noun book, which we have encountered before, we know that if there is more than one of these we refer to them as books. Likewise, given the nonsense word as in the sentence, 'The smilti stink which I have just made up'. You know smilti would refer to more than one of these smelly things. Speakers of English have tacit knowledge of the rule by which one can 'add' 's' and can use it to produce the plural form of virtually any noun. I have emphasized the notion of rule, taking the existence of rules for granted.

We will discuss why a generative is a system of explicit rules which may apply recursively to generate an indefinite number of sentences which can be as

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long as one wants them to be. Reclusiveness has the consequence that, in principle, there is no upper limit to the length of a sentence. A grammatical constituent like a noun phrase (NP) or a pre-positional phrase (PP) can contain an indefinite number of further constituents of that category as in the sentence 'John saw the picture of the baby on the table in the attic.' In generative linguistics, 'grammar' can refer to the implicit, totally unarticulated knowledge of rules and principles of their language. This tacit knowledge enables them to distinguish between well-formed and ill-formed words and utterances in their language. For example, many English speakers may not be able to explain in an articulate mail why it is correct to say 'a grain' but incorrect to say 'an oat'. Nevertheless their knowledge of English grammatical structure enables them to determine that the former is correct and the latter is not.

Secondly, whereas in traditional approaches 'grammar only includes morphology and syntax; in generative linguistics the terra grammar is employed in a much wider sense. It not only covers morphology and syntax but also semantics, the lexicon and phonology, hence, there are rules of grammar in every linguistic module. Phonological rules, morphological rules, syntactic rules and semantic rules are all regarded as rules of grammar.

Thirdly, grammar and rules of grammar may refer to a book containing a statement of the rules and principles inferred by linguists to lie behind the linguistic behavior of speakers of a particular language. These rules simply describe regular patterns observed in the linguistic data.

Lastly, some grammars are books containing prescriptive statements. Such grammars contain rules that prescribe certain kinds of usage. Outside linguistics, this view of grammar is still prevalent. The reason for this is clear. In everyday life, rules are normally mechanisms for regulating behavior- the behavior of pupils in a school, members of a club, inmates of a prison, etc. In many traditional pedagogical grammars rules serve the same thing. They are statements like 'A sentence must not end with a preposition.' They prescribe what the officially or socially approved usage is in the opinion of the grammarian. In much of modern linguistics, however, rules have a different function.

### 13.6.1 Language Acquisition

The following section discusses the phrase structure, deep and surface structures and transformational rules.

#### Phrase structure

The syntactic structure of a sentence can be represented as an inverted tree diagram. Its start is sentence (S), which then branches into its immediate NP (Noun Phrase) and VP (Verb Phrase). Each of the constituents of NP and VP then can branch into its syntactic constituents. Let us take the example of the sentence, 'The boy kicked the ball.' The phrase structure of this sentence can be represented as a diagram in the following manner:

**Phrase structure rules in transformational grammar**

In Chomsky's transformational (generative) grammar, two basic types of syntactic rules are proposed:

- Phrase structure rules
- Transformational rules

The phrase structure tree of the sentence, 'The boy kicked the ball' will be as follows:

- S – NP + VP (Sentence – Noun Phrase + Verb Phrase)
- NP – Art + N (Noun Phrase – Article + Noun)
- VP – V + NP (Verb Phrase – Verb + Noun Phrase)
- NP – Art + N (Noun Phrase – Article + Noun)

**Selection of PS rules of English**

PS rules describe how syntactic categories/phrases combine to form larger constituents in a given language.

**Sentence/clause-level PS rules (English has quite a fixed clause-level PS rule)**

- S NP VP (a sentence is obligatorily comprised of a NP and a VP)

  [NP The students] [VP attended their lectures].

  But some sentences also contain an auxiliary:
- S NP Aux VP

  The students will take exams.

  The auxiliary is optional; we can indicate this with (...).
- S NP (Aux) VP

  where ( ) indicates an optional constituent

  VP-related PS-rules (more variation here)
- VP V

  Talked
- VP V Adv

  talked loudly
- VP V NP

  ate their desserts
- VP V NP PP (Adv)

  put the book on the table (wearily)

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- VP V (S)

  know (the students attended their lectures)

  So, a VP must contain a verb, but can also contain a lot of other phrases (...):
- VP ! V (NP) (PP)(Adv) (S)

**NP-related PS-rules (lots of options)**

- NP N

  books
- NP ! Adj N

  unopened books
- NP ! Det Adj N

  the unopened books
- NP ! Det Adj N PP

  the unopened books on the table

  So NP must contain N but can also contain a lot of other phrases
- NP ! (Det) (Adj) N (PP)

**Source:** http://www.ling.cam.ac.uk/li1/syntax/Li1_Syntax_2.pdf

### The Concepts of Kernel and Non- Kernel Sentences (Deep and Surface Structure)

Often, sentences are ambiguous as we are not able to figure out what they mean. For example, in the sentence, 'Old man and woman are going', we are not sure whether old is an adjective only for man or also for the woman. Therefore, it is usually said that any grammatical analysis is divided into two parts. One part talks about the superficial or apparent structure of sentences, and the other about the underlying structure of sentences. The deep structure is abstract and allows the native speaker of a language to understand the sentence. It may then be said that the deep structure expresses the semantic contents of a sentence, whereas the surface structure of a sentence determines its phonetic form. Transformation functions as a link between the deep structure of sentences and their surface structures. For example, in the sentence, 'Visiting doctors can be a nuisance', the surface structure does not make the meaning clear. If we go to the deep structure of the sentence it may either mean- (i) We visit doctors and can be a nuisance. Or, it may mean (ii) Doctors visit us and they can be a nuisance.

The meaning of the sentence becomes clear only when an immediate constituent analysis of the sentence is done. In this example, it is unclear as to whether the word 'nuisance' is intended for the visit or for doctors. Similarly, in the sentence, 'old man and woman are going', we are not sure as to whether in the

adjectival phrase, 'old man and woman', old stands for man and woman. Let us do an immediate constituent analysis of the phrase 'old man and woman', and figure out the meaning.

In the first case, we can say that:

S – AP + V (Old man and woman + are going)

AP – Aj + NP (old + man and woman)

In the second case:

S – AP + V (Old man and woman + are going)

AP – AP + N (old man + woman)

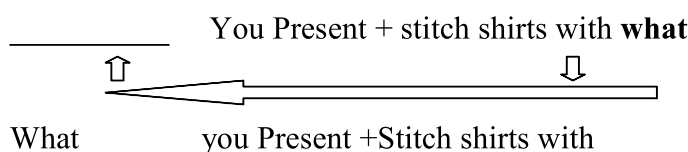
When we do immediate constituent analysis like this through phrase structure, there is no ambiguity in the sentence. In the first case, the adjective 'old' is both for man and woman, and in the second case, the man is old but the woman is not. Thus, the surface structure of a sentence may have its ambiguity but when we go to the deep structure of a sentence the ambiguity vanishes and it helps us in understanding the signification of the sentence.

**Basic Transformation**

The transformation involves the following:

**Interrogative**

Questions form a basic type of sentence in any language. The difference in word order in questions has to be captured by a very different kind of rule from a phrase structure rule. The transformational rule called the question word movement rule or Wh–movement rule operates on a deeper representation to move the question word to the front of the sentence. The name Wh–movement comes from generative grammar, where a wh–word begins at some other place in a sentence and moves to the front. But along with it there are also a number of other elements in a sentence that show the special word order found in questions. Let us try to discuss Wh–movement through an example. The interrogative sentence is 'What do you stitch shirts with?' Most interrogative sentences operate on a hidden or 'deeper' representation to move the question word 'what' to the front of the sentence:




In the next step there is a subject–auxiliary inversion:

What do+ present you stitch shorts with

This is the S-structure representation. From here, we come to the interrogative sentence—'what do you stitch shorts with?'

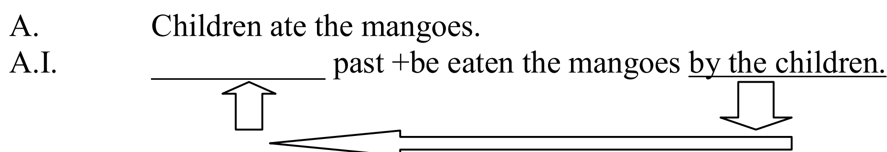
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**Passive**

Passive transformation is derived from the deep structure of the active sentence (which is sometimes thought to be a sub-type of the transformation of NP movement). Let us illustrate passivization through an example. In the following example, the passive sentence B, is derived from the deep structure representation (sentence A.I) of the active sentence A.

A. Children ate the mangoes.

A.I. ___________ past +be eaten the mangoes by the children.



B. The mangoes were (= be + Past third Plural) eaten by the children.

**Negative**

Negation is an important area of study of syntax as it affects not only the structure of the sentence but also the meaning. In English, there are two kinds of negation, which are as follows:

- The morphological prefixes such as un-, in-, im-, and dis- are used to express the opposites of the meaning of certain individual words. In these cases, the sentential meaning is not negated but the meaning of the individual word is negated.
- In the other case, known as syntactic negation, the effect is the change of meaning of the affirmative sentence.

For example:

Affirmative sentence: I am very happy with you

Negative sentences: A: Ram is very unhappy with you.

B: Ram is not very happy with you.

In the first case, it is clear that Ram is unhappy, whereas in the second sentence, it may be that Ram is either unhappy or not as happy as he should be.

**Contraction**

'Contraction' is the term used to describe the phenomena where one word is reduced and apparently affixed to another. For example, when have not is realized as haven't, or we have as we've or when want to is realized as wanna. There are different kinds of contraction in English. One of the most common among them is the 'finite auxiliary contraction'. In this case, finite auxiliaries (have, be, and modals will and would) appear to contract with elements to their left, as in:

- We've eaten the mango.
- We're eating the mango.

- We'll eat the mango.
- We'd eat the mango.

It involves the apparent contraction of the auxiliaries with something to its left. The finite auxiliary contracts with whatever is to its left. The other well-known contraction is that of 'want to' as 'wanna'. For example,

- Who do you wanna dance with?
- Who do you wanna dance?

There are some analyses that claim that wanna is only possible when 'want' and 'to' are adjacent. There are other analyses in which the scholars feel that it is no contraction at all, at least not in the phonological or syntactic sense. 'Wanna' under this analysis is formed in the lexicon, and it is inserted in the syntax just like an ordinary verb.

### 13.6.2 Competence and Other Concepts

Competence is a term which is used in linguistic theory in generative grammar which refers to a person's knowledge of his language. How much system of rules a language user has mastered so that he may be able to produce end number of sentences. How much he can recognize the mistakes and ambiguities in the use of a language. Competence is an idealized conception of language which stands in opposition to the idea of performance which is actually the utterance of speech. According to Chomsky, competence has been used as a reaction to the linguistic era before generative grammar which was mainly occupied with the performance. The aim of the transformational grammarians was to represent the creative capacity of a native speaker to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences which were implied by the linguistic competence.

According to McNeil, competence is the knowledge of linguistic rules, categories, etc., that accounts for native speaker's intuitions about his language and the expression of these utterances in talking and listening is known as performance. Chomsky also believes that what a native speaker knows intuitively about his language is competence, hence, speech production and speech comprehension are the categories of linguistic performance, yet both involve the expression of competence. The former involves producing and encoding of speech whereas the latter involves receiving or decoding speech.

#### Dell Hymes' Concept of Communicative Competence and Others

In the following sections, we will discuss the different types of competence.

#### Linguistic competence

It refers to a native speaker's linguistic knowledge. It comprises of grammatical rules of a language. It indicates how efficient a native speaker is in linguistic knowledge. Linguistic competence is the first version of competence which has also faced strong criticism.

**Dell Hymes' concept of communicative competence**

It refers to native speaker's ability to produce and understand sentences which are appropriate to the context. It is different from linguistic competence as linguistic competence is more concerned with linguistic knowledge but communicative competence deals with terms like context, setting, the relation between speaker and listener. In communicative competence, the speaker has to have the information and knowledge of environmental factors, the pressures that stem from the time and place of speaking. Thus, communicative competence refers not only to the right application of grammatical rules but also how and when to use those utterances appropriately. Communicative competence can be further divided into the following terms:

- **Grammatical competence**- Words and rules.
- **Sociolinguistic competence-**Appropriateness.
- **Strategic competence**-Appropriate use of communicative strategies.
- **Discourse competence-**Cohesion and coherence.
- **Pragmatic competence-** Use of language and background knowledge, personal beliefs.
- **Literary Competence-** Handling the literary language.

**Performance**

Performance can be described in two ways- it is a technique in which practitioners are trained to control the use of their vocal organs and as per the linguistic theory, it refers to the language-set of specific utterances produced by native speakers. Many critics find problems regarding the distinction between competence and performance. However, it has been proved that the utterances of performance contain features which may be irrelevant to the rules and regulations of grammar many times. Performance may also decline due to psychological, emotional barriers of the speaker, memory loss, lapse of memory and biological limitations. A speaker may have linguistic competence but the use of speech and utterances can be used at its best as far as a speaker knows more than the grammatical rules. It means just having the knowledge of grammar cannot make a speaker eligible to produce utterances and to understand them. Thus, the grammar formed by grammarians is only one part of the speaker's knowledge. Linguistic performance is more relevant. It involves psychological processes which include the following:

- Producing utterances.
- Understanding them and making judgments about them and acquiring the ability to do these things.

Certain factors such as chewing a gum, short memory, tiredness, are the causes behind failure of performance. As a result of such factors, performance does not always reflect competence. Language behaviour is an approach among different

approaches. However, a lot of linguists do not believe in the need for the consultation of informants, i.e., native speaker's language. Some linguists claim that they deal with their own intuitions about language though they have never heard it before. Thus, a speaker's actual language behaviour or his performance gives an indirect reflection of his competence. Performance is a reflection of competence. Every individual has his/her linguistic competence thus, the performance also varies from person to person/ speaker to speaker. For example, if an individual has often tongue slips in every day conversation, it does not mean that he does not have linguistic competence. However, it may come under performance errors like discussed above as tiredness, lapses of memory, boredom, drunkenness, external and internal barriers and so on. There is a close relationship between linguistic competence and performance as it depends on speaker's knowledge and execution of that knowledge.

**Selection Restrictions**

In early 60s, semantic features were the unique theoretical instruments of semantic analysis. It evolved in the 70s and 80s. In the first place, it was connected with lexical meanings. It also drew the notion of semantic features aside. It is the semantic feature and not the syntactic one which plays the leading role in regulating selection restrictions in lexicon and grammar. It is a point of debate whether selection restrictions should be treated in syntax or semantics or even outside grammar. For example, a verb 'eat' requires a subject which should refer to an animate entity and its object should be concrete but if we try to violate selection restrictions, the result could be ' mountain eats' which is an example of sheer violation of selection restrictions leading to anomaly.

The phenomenon of selection restrictions was first described by Chomsky in 1965 which is a part of linguistics. If we read the following sentences:

- Kim ate a motor-bike.
- There is an apple bathing in the water.

The verb 'eat' requires an edible object and also the action of bathing can be fulfilled by an animate entity. One should also consider the following sentences:

- The dog barks.
- The philodendron barks.

From the above mentioned sentences, it can be implied that the sheer violation of selection restrictions can lead to ambiguity and anomaly. For example, in the sentence, 'the astrologer married a star' may mean a film star or celestial body but at the same time the example can be disambiguated as we know that the object of marry must be human.

Selection restrictions are language specific. In English, 'drive' means a locomotion which is driven by an engine but in German word 'reiten' can be said only for the riding back on the animal. Thus, we can see that violation of selection

restrictions does not always result in an ungrammatical utterance. Selection restrictions may be violated in metonymic, metaphoric and idiomatic utterances. For example, I drank the whole bottle. In this sentence, the bottle cannot be drunk rather the element contained in bottle. (Metonymy), in another sentence, the 'camel' is the ship of the desert. In this, the camel cannot be the ship so a metaphor is used here (Metaphor), while 'to pour out one's grief to someone' is an idiom (idiom). Thus, one can find that violation of selectional restrictions is highly context sensitive. They are pragmatic phenomenon. On one hand, they seem to be related to lexical information and on the other hand, we cannot just say that the violation of selectional restrictions lead to such expressions which are uninterpretable. Hence, selectional restriction is a part of the semantics-pragmatics-interface.

**Lexis and Grammar**

If we see carefully, we find that historically, linguistics focused on grammar neglecting lexis. Traditionally linguistics was grammar centric as it dealt with phonology, phonetics and grammar whereas the components of lexicon were considered very particular. Lexis was considered as the province of dictionary-makers, it does not concern with linguists. Due to the shift in ELT from grammar to lexis, there is a change in the attitude of linguists. In the existing times, the term 'lexis' which was traditionally used by linguists, has become a common word which is frequently even used in textbooks.

**Lexis+ vocabulary + grammar**

Lexis is considered as a wider concept which consists of collocations, chunks and formulaic expressions. It can even include such expressions as follows:

If I were you, I had not done this.

In Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), some structures associated with grammar began to be associated with grammar and taught lexically or functionally. For example, 'I'd like to…' is not taught as a conditional sentence but as a chunk expression. In our day to day interaction, we come across many persons who use English without following any grammatical rules. According to Michael Lewis, the founder of Lexical Approach, there is no direct relationship between knowledge of grammar and speaking.

While teaching English, the expression such as 'Don't make any noise-she's fallen asleep./Don't make any noise-she's asleep. In the sentences, what does ('s) stand for (is or has)? Thus, the students of English should be taught functional occurrences of language.

**Language Universals**

Languages in the world differ from each other. At first glance, in different parts of the world, languages are extremely different. However, still the aim of linguistic

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theories is to pin down what is common in the languages of the world. Languages differ from each other in relation to its tools such as vowels and consonants, nouns and verbs, front and back vowels, subject and object. However, still we can discuss language universals as per the following kinds of universals:

- **Absolute universal:** Absolute universal refers to properties found in a predominant part of the languages of the world. For example, all languages have one thing in common that is they cannot just depend on either vowels or consonants. All languages have vowels and consonants.
- **Statistical universal:** In the vast majority of languages, subject precedes the object. Language universals may be called the generalizations about the properties of languages. If a language has voiced fricatives like /v/ and /z/, it has also unvoiced fricatives like /f/ and /s/ but if a language has unvoiced fricatives it does not necessarily have voiced fricatives. And some languages can lack both voiced and unvoiced fricatives. Such universals are known as 'absolute universals'.

Another universal can be noticed that if a language places the main verb between subject and object and even the relative clause also follows the noun it modifies as:

'A cat ate the mouse' and 'The cat that ate the mouse…….'

But Chinese and a few other languages are exceptions, placing relative clauses before the noun they modify.

Languages learn from each other. When languages come in contact with each other, they learn. They adopt many changes in features spread across the world. Some language features are universal as they make linguistic utterances easier both to produce and to interpret for cognitive, anatomic or other reasons. The most absolute universal type of sentence includes both the vowels and consonants. One cannot imagine a language having only consonants. Such language would be more difficult to hear and a language with only vowels would be unsatisfactory because we are only able to distinguish a very limited number of vowel qualities.

**Check Your Progress**

8. What is phrase marker?
9. Where does the name Wh-movement come from?
10. What was the aim of transformational grammarians?
11. How does McNeil define competence?

## 13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. The grammars created in the classical tradition reflect the prescriptive view that one dialect or variety of a language is to be valued more highly than others and should be the norm for all speakers of the language.
2. Murray's grammar represents a practice that continued to develop throughout the 19th century and was still dominant in the 1960s when linguistics began to focus more on generative and transformational grammar due to Noam Chomsky's groundbreaking and influential ideas.
3. An independent clause refers to a subject and verb that make a complete thought. Independent clauses are called independent because they can stand on their own and make sense.
4. Saussure's fresh ideas were consistent with those of his influential compatriot, Claude Levi-Strauss, and also those of Emile Durkheim, the pioneer of the new field of sociology.
5. Saussure divided language into three levels: (i) language, the human capacity to evolve sign systems, (ii) langue, the system of language that is the rules and conventions which organize it, and (iii) parole, any individual utterance or the individual's use of language. Saussure was chiefly interested in langue as a historical phenomenon.
6. This is the basic difference between langue and parole: whereas one is social and a body of abstract knowledge, the other is individual and is perceptible in individual instances.
7. The process and result of IC-analysis can vary based upon whether one chooses the constituency relation of phrase structure grammars (constituency grammars) or the dependency relation of dependency grammars as the underlying principle that organizes constituents into hierarchical structures.
8. The representation of the structure of a sentence is called its Phrase Marker or P Marker.
9. The name Wh–movement comes from generative grammar, where a wh–word begins at some other place in a sentence and moves to the front. But along with it there are also a number of other elements in a sentence that show the special word order found in questions.
10. The aim of the transformational grammarians was to represent the creative capacity of a native speaker to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences which were implied by the linguistic competence.
11. According to McNeil, competence is the knowledge of linguistic rules, categories, etc. that accounts for native speaker's intuitions about his language and the expression of these utterances in talking and listening is known as performance.

## 13.8 SUMMARY

- Traditional grammar can be traced back over 2,000 years and includes grammars from the classical period of Greek, India, and Rome; the Middle Ages; the Renaissance; the 18th and 19th century; and more modern times.
- The work of Greek scholar Dionysius Thrax is the model for all grammars of European languages that follow. His *Hç grammátikç tékhnç* (c. 100 BC; The Art of Letters) was the first widely recognized text to provide a curriculum for learning proper Greek.
- One of the most influential grammars of the 18th century was Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* (1794), which was updated in new editions for decades.
- Murray's grammar represents a practice that continued to develop throughout the 19th century and was still dominant in the 1960s when linguistics began to focus more on generative and transformational grammar due to Noam Chomsky's groundbreaking and influential ideas.
- A dependent clause refers to a subject and verb that don't make a complete thought. Dependent clauses always need to be attached to an independent clause (they're too weak to stand alone).
- A Complex sentence has one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. They can be arranged in these ways: (SV because SV.) or (Because SV, SV.) or (S, because SV, V.)
- In 1878, at the age of 21, Saussure published a long and bright article, 'Note on the Primitive System of the Indo-European Vowels', which established his credential as a young scholar.
- In linguistics, Saussure's focus on the synchronic dimension and on language as an interrelated system of elements was maintained through the American Structuralist period (Bloomfield, Hockett). It was extended to the generative period (Chomsky, Bresnan).
- While synchronic linguistics sees language as a living whole, existing as a state at a particular point in time, diachronic linguistics considers language in its historical development (Greek dia-through, chronos-time).
- Saussure also made a categorical distinction between langue and parole. Langue formed the subject matter of linguistics, and parole was constituted of all those elements which lay beyond the domain of linguistics. Parole dealt with individual utterance in the sense of how an individual uses a language within the structure of a language (langue).
- In Saussure's view, words are not symbols which 'refer' to things, but are 'signs' which are made up of two parts. They comprise a sound pattern (either written or spoken) called a 'signifier', and a concept called a 'signified'.

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- IC-analysis divides up a sentence into major parts or immediate constituents, and the process continues until irreducible constituents are reached, i.e., until each constituent consists of only a word or a meaningful part of a word.
- Phrase Structure Grammar (PS Grammar) was introduced by Noam Chomsky in ***Syntactic Structures*** (1957). PS Grammar contains a set of rules called PS rules or rewrite rules. A rewrite rule is a replacement rule.
- The central objective of generative linguistics is to understand the nature of linguistic knowledge and its acquisition by the infants. In the light of this objective, a fundamental question that a theory of word-structure must address is, what kind of information must speakers have about the words of their language in order to use them in utterances?
- The syntactic structure of a sentence can be represented as an inverted tree diagram. Its start is sentence (S), which then branches into its immediate NP (Noun Phrase) and VP (Verb Phrase). Each of the constituents of NP and VP then can branch into its syntactic constituents.
- Passive transformation is derived from the deep structure of the active sentence (which is sometimes thought to be a sub-type of the transformation of NP movement).
- Performance can be described in two ways- it is a technique in which practitioners are trained to control the use of their vocal organs and as per the linguistic theory, it refers to the language-set of specific utterances produced by native speakers.
- In the vast majority of languages, subject precedes the object. Language universals may be called the generalizations about the properties of languages. If a language has voiced fricatives like /v/ and /z/, it has also unvoiced fricatives like /f/ and /s/ but if a language has unvoiced fricatives it does not necessarily have voiced fricatives.

## 13.9 KEY WORDS

- **Diachrony:** It refers to the change in the meaning of words over time.
- **Philology**: It is defined as the study of literary texts as well as oral and written records, the establishment of their authenticity and their original form, and the determination of their meaning.
- **Langue:** It denotes a system of internalized, shared rules governing a national language's vocabulary, grammar, and sound system.
- **Immediate Constituent Analysis (IC Analysis):** It is a system of grammatical analysis that divides sentences into successive layers, or constituents, until, in the final layer, each constituent consists of only a word or meaningful part of a word.

- **Metonymy:** It is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is referred to by the name of something closely associated with that thing or concept.
- **Metaphor:** It is a figure of speech that is used to make a comparison between two things that aren't alike but do have something in common.
- **Lexis:** It refers to the total stock of words in a language.

## 13.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Name some Latin grammars, influenced by the works of Thrax and Varro, produced in the Middle Ages.
2. Give some examples of simple two-word sentences.
3. How do synchronic linguistics and diachronic linguistics see language?
4. What is the 'paradigmatic' concerned with?
5. What is the task of the structuralist?
6. Write a short note on Sentence/Clause-level PS Rules.
7. What does 'absolute universal' refer to?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the four basic patterns of sentences.
2. Examine Saussure's concepts of langue and parole.
3. Explain the concept of IC Analysis.
4. Analyse why a generative is a system of explicit rules which may apply recursively to generate an indefinite number of sentences.
5. Examine any two processes included in basic transformation.

## 13.11 FURTHER READINGS

Wood, F.T. 2000. *An Outline History of English Language.* New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Limited.

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# UNIT 14 THEORIES OF SEMANTICS

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**Structure**



## 14.0 INTRODUCTION

Semantics refers to the study of meaning of words, phrases and sentences in a language. It is concerned with the conventional meaning of words rather than with meaning inferred by an individual speaker. It can address and investigate meanings at different levels. Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics and semiotics that studies how context contributes to meaning. Both the terms, 'Semantics' and 'Pragmatics' are concerned with the process of signification, the difference is that semantics deals with signification in an abstract context whereas pragmatics deals with signification in a particular context. The term *pragmatics* was proposed by Morris in 1938 to select a field of study of signs and their relationship to interpreters; whereas the term *semantics* was used to designate the more abstract study of the relationship between signs and the objects. In this unit, the different types of meanings as given by Leech have been explained in addition to important concepts like hyponymy, polysemy, collocation, metonymy etc. Moreover, theories related to pragmatics and discourses by distinguished theorists such as Grice, Searle and Freud have been analysed.

## 14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the concept and meaning of semantics
- Analyse the various aspects of metaphor
- Discuss the nuances and theories of pragmatics and discourses

## 14.2 SEMANTICS

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Semantics is described as the linguistic study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Linguistic semantics, therefore, deals with the conventional meaning conveyed by the use of words, phrases and sentences of a language. In semantic analysis, what one focuses on is what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what an individual speaker might want them to mean on a particular occasion. When we will come to Pragmatics in the next unit, we will be able to understand the difference between Semantics and Pragmatics. Pragmatics deals with meaning in different contexts, to put it in a simplistic manner. Often, it is seen that to understand the meaning of a word, we can at least do two things:

- Refer to a dictionary–which will give us the semantic meaning of the word.
- Refer to the context–which can often tell us what the speaker or the author intended to signify in the given context.

When we are dealing with semantics, we are often dealing with just the meaning from a dictionary point of view. But this way of looking at an utterance or writing has its own problems as the dictionary is not often a great pointer to understand the signification of an utterance. For example, Chomsky used a particular sentence– 'Colourless green ideas sleep furiously.' Each of the word in this sentence has a meaning (dictionary meaning) but when it comes to make sense of the sentence, it is seen that we are not able to make sense of it. So, semantic meaning is not often the best way to decipher the meaning of an utterance.

### Meaning of Semantics

It is true that no two words are same in their meaning. If the meaning of two or more words would have been similar, there would not have been a need for two different words. There must be a slight variation in meaning amongst the two words. Two or more words with very closely related meanings are called synonyms. These synonymous words can often be substituted in a sentence to mean almost the same thing. However, this may not always be true. For example, 'what is your answer?', 'what is your reply?' or 'what is your response?' almost mean the same thing. The meanings may differ from context to context. However, the words which are synonymous, like 'reply', 'answer' and 'response' cannot be used when a person is writing an exam. It seems not very proper to say that 'Sam has replies to all the questions in the examination'. Also, 'Sam has responses to all the questions in the examination' is also not correct. The proper mode should be 'Sam has answers to all the questions in the examination.' Thus, depending on the context, we can substitute one synonymous word with another. Therefore, one needs to keep in mind that the idea of 'sameness' of meaning used in discussing synonymy is not necessarily 'total sameness'.

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### Seven Types of Meaning

*Semantics: The Study of Meaning* published in the year 1981 by Geoffrey Leech classifies meaning from a semantic point of view and tries to provide 'a systematic account of the nature of meaning'. The whole concept in Leech's thesis rests on the distinction between meaningful and meaningless utterances in relation to 'the knowledge of language' and 'the knowledge of the real world'. Leech talks about the seven types of meaning: (a) Conceptual meaning (b) Connotative meaning (c) Social meaning (d) Affective meaning (e) Reflected meaning (f) Collocative meaning (g) Thematic meaning

- **Conceptual meaning:** The conceptual meaning 'is widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication' as it 'has a complex and sophisticated organization which may be compared with, and cross-related to, a similar organization on the syntactic and phonological levels of language'. For example, the language is usually patterned in binaries so as to make it intelligible; 'man' and 'woman'–one is understood in terms of the other.
- **Connotative meaning:** It 'is the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers *to*, over and above its purely conceptual content'. So, it is usually perceived that connotative meaning is open-ended in nature in comparison to conceptual meaning as the referent of the meaning depends on various other factors, such as age or society, and they can also depend on the individual, as claimed by Leech.
- **Social meaning:** It is the meaning that we gather out of an utterance when it is used in a social context. Language varies with usages and therefore the meaning of what is being said also varies along with its use. Some of the ways in which the variation of language can be studied in detail are–Dialects (regional/in the sense of geographical), time (for example Shakespearean English is different from today's English), province (the language of a specific domain, such as law or science, etc.) status (colloquial, slang, formal, etc.), modality (how it is spoken, in the form of lecture or a joke, etc.), singularity (in terms of specific style such as Wordsworthian English or Eliot's English).
- **Affective meaning:** It is related to the way a language can reflect personal feelings of the speaker that may include attitude to a listener or something he is talking about. Affective meaning can be expressed directly and indirectly, once again depending on the context.
- **Reflected meaning:** It is when one sense of a word influences our response to another sense. It is to make sense of meaning with its associative power of meaning.
- **Collocative meaning:** It refers to 'the associations a word acquires on account of the meanings of words which tend to occur in its environment'. For example, Leech uses the example of words like 'to wander' and 'to stroll' and explains that it is usual that 'cows may wander, but may not stroll'.

- **Thematic meaning:** It provides an answer to the question: 'What is communicated by the way the author formed and organized the message?' Leech states that thematic meaning is 'matter of choice between alternative grammatical constructions' for instance in sentences: 'A man is here to see you.' and 'There is a man here to see you.'

### Lexical Semantics

Lexical semantics can be defined as the 'study of word meaning' which is concerned with the study of lexical (i.e. content) word meaning, as opposed to the meanings of grammatical (or function) words. When we discussed semantics in general, we talked about how meanings of words can often lead to ambiguity when we are trying to deal with it in a sentence and we gave the example of Chomsky's sentence, 'Colourless green ideas sleep furiously', which though has meanings in their individual words, does not account to anything but ambiguity and incomprehension, when it comes to lexical sense. This led to the development of lexical semantics. The lexical semanticists are interested in the open classes of noun, verb and adjective and with more 'content' members of the adverb and preposition classes. Even though these are the words that lexical semanticists are trying to study but one needs to understand that these cannot be studied in a vacuum. For quick reference

- **Lexicon:** The sum of all lexemes of a language
- **Sense/intension/denotation:** Those features and properties which define a linguistic expression (content without reference)
- **Extension:** the class of entities to which a lexeme is correctly applied (reference potential)

### Superordinate Terms

Superordinate terms (often also called 'hypernyms,' 'anaphoric nouns,' or 'discourse-organizing words') are nouns which can be used to describe a whole 'class' or group of things. Therefore, a superordinate term serves as an umbrella term that incorporates the sense of other terms within it. For instance, 'vehicle' is a superordinate concept of 'lorry,' 'automobile,' 'bike,' etc. Superordinate words play a major role in promoting 'cohesion' by providing writers with a more clear means than pronouns (it, they, this, these, those) to connect their ideas either back to earlier pieces of text, or forward to upcoming knowledge. Superordinate words tell the reader what to expect ahead of an idea as they arise. Superordinate terms serve as the 'class' of definitions in this role, and define the items and examples contained in lists.

### The Concept of Prototype

The original meaning of prototype (studied elaborately Rosch as well as Labov) is the central member of so-called basic level terms, i.e. the hierarchical level with the highest proto-typicality. For example, for the category of 'bird'-'robin' is a

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prototype in North America while 'sparrow' is in Europe. Thus, it represents the hierarchical relationship level with the highest proto-typicality which is in contrast to Superordinate levels (such as "animal") and sub-ordinate levels (such as 'robin'). In other words, it can be said that in a minimal lexical class, the term that accepts the highest number of contexts can also serve as the generic term.

**Antonymy**

Words with opposite meanings are called antonyms. For example, big/small, fast/slow, happy/sad, hot/cold, long/short, male/female, old/new, rich/poor, true/false. Antonyms can be divided into two main types:

- Gradable antonyms, that is, opposites along a scale and
- Non-gradable antonyms, that is, direct opposites.

Gradable antonyms, such as the pair, big/small, can be used in comparative structures, such as 'A football is bigger than a cricket ball' or 'a cricket ball is smaller than a football'. Moreover, it should also be mentioned here that the negative of one member of a gradable pair does not necessarily imply the other. For example, 'my car is not old', does not mean that the car is new. Non-gradable antonyms are antonyms such as dead/alive. They are non-gradable as we cannot say that someone is more or less dead than the other. In this case, the negative of one member of a non-gradable pair does imply the other member.

**Hyponymy**

When the meaning of one form of word is included in the meaning of the other, the relationship between the two words is described as hyponymy. For example, animal/dog, vegetable/carrot, flower/rose, tree/banyan. The concept of 'inclusion' is involved in this relationship. The concept of a rose necessarily implies that it is a flower. Therefore, rose is a hyponym of flower. In hyponymous connections, one is primarily looking at the meaning of words in some type of hierarchical relationship. The relation of hyponymy captures the concept of 'is a kind of'. For example, let us consider the sentence, 'carrot is a kind of vegetable'. Sometimes, the only thing we know about the meaning of a word is that it is a hyponym of another term.

**Polysemy**

Two or more words with the same form and related meanings are known as polysemy. Polysemy can be described as one form (written or spoken) having multiple meanings that are all related by extension. Examples are the word 'head', used to refer to the object on top of your body, on top of a glass of beer, person at the top of a company or department, and many other things. Other examples of polysemy are 'foot' (of person, of bed, of mountain) or run (person does, water does, colours do). When one is not sure whether different uses of a single word are examples of homonymy or polysemy, one should check in a dictionary. If the

word has multiple meanings, it is polysemous and there will be a single entry. There will be a numbered list of the different meanings of that word. If two words are treated as homonyms, they will typically have two separate entries. In most dictionaries, bank, mail, mole, and sole are clearly treated as homonyms whereas face, foot, get, head and run are treated as examples of polysemy.

**Metonymy**

Metonymy is a substitution of a word or phrase to stand for a word or phrase similar in meaning. Examples are as follows:

- In Shakespeare's time, the crown was anti-Catholic. (Crown stands for Queen Elizabeth I.)
- The White House was severely criticized for its opposition to the tax increase. ('White House' stands for the president or the president and his advisers.)
- The Wall Street welcomes the reduction in interest rates. ('Wall Street' represents investors.)
- Sweat, not wealth, earned her the respect of her peers. ('Sweat' stands for hard work.)

Some more examples are as follows: The close connection can be based on a container–contents relation (bottle/water, can/juice), a whole–part relation (car/wheels, house/roof) or a representative–symbol relationship (king/crown, the President/the White House). Metonymy makes it possible for us to understand that 'He drank the whole bottle', although it sounds absurd literally (i.e., he drank the liquid, not the glass object). Similarly, when we say 'The White House has announced . . . or Downing Street protested... , we do not get puzzled that buildings appear to be talking. This is because we know that the buildings are representative of something, someone or some office. We use metonymy when we talk about filling up the car, answering the door, boiling a kettle, giving someone a hand, or needing some wheels. Making sense of such expressions often depends on context, background knowledge and inference.

**Collocation**

One way in which we organize our vocabulary or knowledge of words is based on the words which frequently occur together. They are technically known as collocation. For example, when one says hammer, most people will say nail, as it is the word that frequently occurs with it. If you say table, mostly people will say chair, and butter elicits bread, needle elicits thread and salt elicits pepper and so forth. In recent years, the study of the words occurring together and their frequency of co-occurrence have received a lot more attention in corpus linguistics. A corpus is a large collection of texts, spoken or written, typically stored as a database of how often specific words or phrases occur and what types of collocations are most common.

**Synonymy, Homonymy, Ambiguity, and Tautology**

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This section will show the meaning relations existing between words.

- **Synonymy** refers to the phenomenon of 'more than one form having the same meaning' such as: talk, chatter, speak, etc. They are listed in a special type of dictionary called thesaurus.
- **Homonymy** refers to the likeness of different words. Such as 'bank' can mean side of a river as well as a financial organization. They are pronounced and spelt alike. When two words are pronounced alike but their spelling is different, they are called as homophones such as quay and key; sweet and suite. Some words which have common spelling but are different in spellings, we call them as homographs.
- **Ambiguity**: Semantic ambiguity occurs when a word is open to multiple interpretations. Such as when the girl returned home late she could see her mother fume. Here, fume conveys more than one meaning, and the impact of the sentence changes considerably based on which meaning is intended.
- **Tautology** refers to the repetitive use of words or phrases that have similar meaning. For instance, my father is a man. Here, the word, 'father' and 'man' convey the same message, so it seems an ungrammatical sentence as the word 'man' is redundant. However, if the word 'man' is used metaphorically to convey.

### 14.2.1 Aspects of Metaphor

'Metaphor has always been defined as the trope of resemblance; not simply between signifier and signified but between what are already two signs; the one designating the other.' – Jacques Derrida.

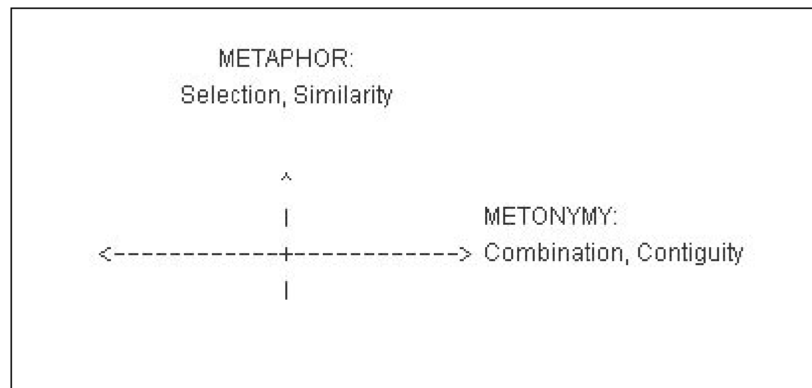
The word 'resemblance' signifies the essential quality of a metaphor because in a metaphoric association the factor that works is the similarity principle, that is, because of similar association one sign is substituted by another as Richard Bradford writes 'a metaphoric association is suggested when two images with no prior causal or circumstantial relationship are juxtaposed: associative meaning is generated rather than recalled.' For example, 'he goes along the road' can be restated as 'he goes along the street.' The similarity principle between the words 'road' and 'street' would make one substitute one word for another.

Metaphor etymologically means 'transporting' – transporting one word for another to give figurative quality to language. Aristotle defines metaphor as a trope which 'consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else, the transference being either from genres to species or from species to genres or from species to species or on grounds of analogy.' Thus, metaphorical process is the process of selection of sign for a figurative language which will make language poetical. As Roman Jakobson says, 'for poetry, metaphor and for prose metonymy

is the line of least resistance and consequently the study of poetical tropes is directed chiefly towards metaphor.'

Roman Jakobson's seminal study on metaphor and metonymy comes in the end of his highly technical discussion of aphasia (that is, language disorder). His studies show that there are two poles – metaphoric and metonymic which makes all discourse possible. Where metaphor corresponds to the selection axis of language depending upon things not normally contiguous and metonymy corresponds to the combination axis of language. We can make a simple chart regarding this –

| **Metaphor** | **Metonymy** |
|---|---|
| Selection | Combination |
| Paradigmatic | Syntagmatic |
| Substitution | Contexture |
| Similarity | Contiguity |




In our day to day conversation, both the metaphorical and the metonymical or we can say that both paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationship works, when the encoder or the addresser wants to communicate something to the addressee he works with the code in a metaphorical or paradigmatic axis in the first building block, followed by the combining and integrating the chosen units along the syntagmatic chain. Then when the addressee or the decoder receives the message his initial encounter is with the combinative sequence, followed by its selected consequences. So, Richard Bradford writes 'our most basic communicative interactions involve us in the following linear combinatory movement from word to word; addresser to addressee cohabit within the syntagm, a kind of contiguity between the participants of any speech event. But the selection pole, that which feeds more readily upon the code is more closely associated with the individual addresser.' Therefore, it is the relationship of the addresser and the code that the metaphorical; axis comes into being in a major way because it is the addresser who first works in the selection process to form the message to be conveyed. But in any interaction both the devices – metaphoric and metonymic have the same importance as Jakobson writes – 'a competition between both devices, metonymic and metaphoric, is manifest in any symbolic process be it interpersonal or social.

Thus, in an inquiry into the structure of dreams the decisive question is whether the symbols and the temporal sequences used are based on contiguity or similarity.'

But Freud's distinction between 'condensation' and 'displacement' (contiguity) and symbolism and identification (similarity) is inconsistent with the Jakobson's model of linguistic communication. In the *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud classified the dream as the disguised fulfillment of a suppressed or repressed wish. The two primary processes of transference from latent dreams to manifest are condensation and displacement. The problem with Jakobson's model is that Freud's model involves a finally indecisive mixture of prelinguistic and linguistic analogies. Condensation and displacement are metonymic which makes use of the syntagmatic pole of contiguity but each item in the latent dream is immanently symbolic and thus invokes the paradigmatic selective pole.

Thus Freud's notion is at odds with Jakobson's model but it was not that Jakobson did not believe in Freud's model of conscious and unconscious activities; rather Freud's consistent argument that creative writing or literature is analogous to and sometimes an example of dream manifestation undermines Jakobson's conception of poetry. Jakobson is using the two terms – metaphorical and metonymical poles, engages himself to establish a binary distinction within all linguistic usages in which metaphor is a function of the paradigmatic selective axis and metonymy a function of its Syntagmatic combinatory counterpart. Jacques Lacan intrudes in between Jakobson and Freud, who states that metaphor is the superimposition of signifier and is linked with the substitution of surface meaning for repressed meaning. In short, metonymy – displacement involves disclosure and metaphor-condensation involves disguise: 'The creative spark of the metaphor does not spring from the conjunction of two images that is of the two signifiers equally actualized. It springs from two signifiers one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the hidden signifier then remaining present through its (metonymic) relation to the rest of the chain.'

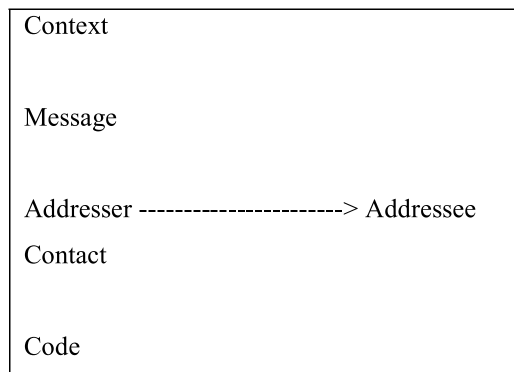
But Jakobson emphasizes that in metaphoric writing the poetic part is stronger whereas in the metonymic writing it is the prosaic or realistic aspect: 'it is generally realized that romanticism is closely linked with metaphor, whereas the equally intimate ties of realism with metonymy usually remain unnoticed'. Thus, the association of poetry with metaphor is very evident from Jakobson's writing, as Richard Bradford says –

'For poetry to register at all we need to be aware that language can relate specifically to a pre-linguistic continuum (the Syntagmatic metonymic axis) and by its own means distort and reorder this continuum (the paradigmatic metaphoric axis).'

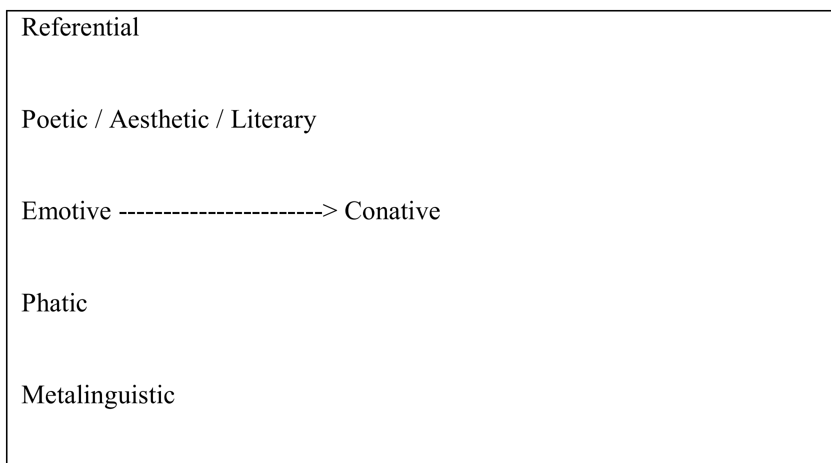
The poetic encoder or the poet is more concerned with the code than the message or the context. The essential quality of poetic language is its ability to defamiliarize or to make strange pattern of linguistic representation. Therefore, the poet's language ought to be metaphorical as it is that metaphorical quality of the

poem which makes it more of a poem as M. H. Abrams says 'A poem is the very image of life expressed in its essential truth. A story of particular facts is a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.'

In the essay 'Linguistics and Poetics', Jakobson talks about six basic functions of communication –




In case of poetry, the model would be -




In case of poetry, the poetic function gains supremacy over the referential function because the poem involves the organization of phonetic material not simply as a decoration signifying structures shared by poetic and non-poetic languages, but as signifying structure in itself. Hence the traditional opposition of form to content is an inaccurate model of the poetic function. 'The poetic function projects the principle of "equivalence" from the axis of selection into the axis of combination.' Thus the concept of "equivalence" that Jakobson introduces means the equivalent element of language are substitutable in the same place in a syntagm as Jakobson writes 'the principle of similarity underlies poetry; the metrical parallelism f lines or the phonic equivalence of rhyming words prompts the question of semantic similarity and contrast; there exist, for instance, grammatical and anti-grammatical but never a grammatical rhyme. Prose, on the contrary is foregrounded by contiguity. Thus,

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for poetry, metaphor and for prose, metonymy – is the line of least resistance and consequently the study of poetical tropes is directed chiefly towards metaphor.'

But Paul Ricoeur in his essay 'Metaphor and the Semantics of Discourse', while making the distinction between semiotics and semantics entails a new relationship of the paradigmatic and Syntagmatic relationships. As he argues that 'the metaphor, treated in discourse – the metaphorical utterance – is a kind of syntagm, and we can no more put the metaphorical process on the Syntagmatic side.' Because if we consider the meaning from the point of view of semantics where sentence is a semantic unit, then it becomes clear that 'a metaphoric utterance must indeed be considered as a syntagm, if it is true that significance results from a certain action that words exert upon each other in the sentence.' Thus following Beneviste's argument that 'it is following their co-optation that the words acquire the values that they did not themselves possess and which can even be contradictory to the values possessed earlier.' We can easily say that metaphor does not simply belong to the paradigmatic order. Thus, metaphor as a paradigmatic does not work if we deal with it in the field of semantics, while Jakobson himself must be aware, as he wrote –

> 'In Poetry, where similarity is superimposed upon contiguity, any metonymy is slightly metaphoric and any metaphor has a metonymic tint.'

**Check Your Progress**

1. What can we do to understand the meaning of a word?
2. What does the whole concept in Leech's thesis rest on?
3. Define 'lexical semantics'.
4. How does Aristotle define 'metaphor'?
5. What is the essential quality of poetic language?
6. Why does the linguistic function gain supremacy over the referential function in poetry?

## 14.3 PRAGMATICS AND DISCOURSES

The terms 'Semantics' and 'Pragmatics' – both deal with the process of signification; while Semantics deals with signification in the abstract order, Pragmatics is signification in a particular context. The term *pragmatics* was proposed by Morris in 1938 to select a field of study of signs and their relationship to interpreters; whereas the term *semantics* was used to designate the more abstract study of the relationship between signs and the objects. So, whereas Semantics is an abstraction in terms of its ambit of study, Pragmatics is dependent on the context in which the utterance is made. In other words, the semantic meaning will not change depending

on the context or the situation, whereas the pragmatic meaning may change with the context – while semantics is not situational; pragmatics is situational in signification.

For example, if we have to interpret the utterance 'I am hungry' – Semantically, it may mean what the dictionary meaning suggest it is – that 'I' (the first person pronoun) did not have food for some time and is craving for some food; but when we look at it pragmatically, there are few things which we need to take into account such as –

a) Who is this 'I'?
b) Where is he or she situated?
c) When is it spoken?
d) What kind of hunger is he or she talking about? – Hunger for food, hunger for more (ambition/ desire), etc.

As none of this is there in the sentence 'I am hungry' therefore only after knowing the situation or the context, the proper pragmatic signification of the sentence is possible.

**Speech Acts**

J. L. Austin's *How to Do Thing with Words* (1962) deals with his theory of Speech Acts. When we speak or communicate, we do not merely exchange information; but at the same time, we assert, request, promise, congratulate, threaten, compliment, advise, order, warn, command and perform various such things. Such acts we perform through our Speeches are called speech acts. Austin is of the opinion that 'The uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of the doing of an action which again would not normally be described as or as just saying something'. In simple words, a speech act is an act we perform through utterance.

For example, when a commander in a war front says, 'March forward', he is performing an act as his words means to go forward and some actions are performed due to his utterance. Though the commander has only spoken two words, but it may result in the army moving forward and taking over the opposition.

So, on one hand, there are these words which lead to certain actions, then there are others such as 'I promise' or 'I request' which do not necessarily lead to action is also a kind of performance. Austin meant for the performatives to be defined in an organized grammatical manner and thus he endeavoured to do so in his Speech Theory. As opposed to these performatives, here are constative functions of some words such as when we say or state certain facts. In short, Performatives are utterances that are used to do thing or perform acts. Constatives are utterances that are employed to make assertions or statements.

It is because of this that he shifts from performative and constative division to talk in favour of the following –

a) **Locutionary acts:** A locutionary act is the act of saying something, it includes making noises of a contain type belonging to a certain

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vocabulary and conforming to the rules of a certain grammar, used with a more or less definite sense and reference.

b) **Illocutionary acts:** An illocutionary act is an act performed in saying something and includes things like making a statement, asking a question, issuing a command, giving a report, greeting, warning, promising and other actions.

c) **Perlocucationary acts:** Perlocutionary acts consists of the production of effects on the feeling, thought, actions of someone, and includes things like informing, or boring or irritating, or convincing, or alarming the listener.

The study of speech acts is focused on the illocutionary act. Austin wrote;

> '….. for some years we have been realizing that the occasion of an utterance matters seriously, and that the words used are to some extent to be explained by the context in which they are designed to be or have actually been spoken in a linguistic interchange'(Austin, 1962: 100).

Therefore, J L. Austin sets out to say that in the declarative sentences often it happens that we are not just declaring something true or false, but also perform some action of part of the action. For example, when someone says that 'I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth', he or she performs the act of naming the ship and betting. The speaker said a sentence in the form of a declaration or a statement. These sentences are grammatically termed as statements, but Austin termed them as 'performatives'.

**Felicity Conditions**

According to Speech Acts Theory, whereas constatives can be judged as true or false, performatives can be felicitous or infelicitious depending on the conditions in which they are uttered. A performative utterance can be happy or unhappy depending on the 'conditions for happy performatives.' For example – 'I declare that he is dead.' is thought to be infelicitous if the speaker does not have any authority of declaring anybody dead, if he is not a doctor. Austin formulated rules to be followed for a making a performative happy. Austin believed that these rules 'are necessary for the smooth or happy functioning of a performance.' For example,

a) Following certain conventions — conventions which are marked by traditions.

b) Circumstances often define the meaning such as the uttering of the priest in a church to declare the bride and groom to be husband and wife

c) The procedure also often decides the conditions, for example, in legal courses and documents

Violations of the felicity conditions can lead to the performative being unhappy of infelicitous. For example, in a marriage ceremony, the bride cannot but say the exact words, 'I do.' She cannot choose to say "yes."

### J. R. Searle: Speech Acts

J. R. Searle also worked on the felicity conditions and divided them into four major types 'depending on how they specify propositional content, preparatory conditions, conditions of sincerity and the existential condition.' The felicity conditions proposed by Searle are –

- **Propositional Content Condition:** Propositional content condition specifies restrictions on the content of complement sentence.
- **Preparatory Condition:** Preparatory condition takes into account pre-conditions that are required of the real world to the illocutionary act.
- **Sincerity Condition:** Sincerity condition states the requisite beliefs, feelings and intentions of the speaker, as whether the speech act is performed sincerely.
- **Essential Condition:** Essential condition relates to the way the speaker is committed to a certain kind of belief of behaviour, having performed a speech act.

### Austin's Typology of Speech Acts

J.L. Austin also classified the speech acts and broadly labeled them into five categories based on performative verbs.

- **Verdictives:** The verdictives are verdicts as the name implies, by a jury arbitrator, or umpire and the performative verbs associated with it are acquit, convict ,find (fact) ,hold (law), interpret, read it as, reckon, place , put it at, grade, assess, characterize, rule, estimate, date, make it, rank, value, diagnose, analyse, describe, rate, take it, measure, locate, calculate, understand
- **Exercitives:** Exercitives 'are the exercising of power rights or influence', and the verb associated are appoint, degrade, denote, dismiss, excommunicate, name, order, command, direct, sentence, fine, grant, levy, vote for, nominate, choose, claim, give, bequeath, pardon, resign, warn, advise, plead, pray, entreat, beg, urge, press, recommend, proclaim, announce, quash, countermand, annul, repeal, enact, reprieve, veto, dedicate, declare closed, declare open.
- **Commissives:** Commissives are 'typified by promising or otherwising undertaking, they commit you to do something', and the verbs associated with it are promise, covenant, contract, undertake, bind(myself), give(my word), (am) determined (to), intend, declare(my intention), mean to, plan , purpose, propose (to), shall, contemplate, envisage, engage, swear, guarantee, pledge (myself), bet, row, agree, consent, dedicate (myself to), declare (for), side with, adopt, champion, embrace, expense, oppose, favour, etc.

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- **Behavitives:** Behavitives are 'a very miscellaneous group, and have to do with attitudes and social behavior and the verbs are (i) for apologies : apologize, (ii) for thanks: thank, (iii) for sympathy: deplore, commiserate, compliment, condole, congratulate, felicitate, sympathize, (iv) for attitudes: resent, (don't) mind, pay tribute, criticize, grumble(about), complain(of), applaud, overlook, commend, deprecate and the non-exercitive uses of blame, approve, favour, (v) for greetings: welcome, bid you farewell, (vi) for wishes : bless, curse, toast, drink (to), wish (performative use), and (vii) for challenges: dare , defy, protest, challenge.(Austin, 1962:160-161).
- **Expositives:** Expositivies make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, how we are using words or, in general, expository. Examples are 'I reply', 'I argue', 'I concede', 'I illustrate', 'I assume', 'I postulate' or are used in acts of exposition, the conducting of argument, the clarifying of usages and of references and the verbs are (1) affirm, deny, state, describe, class, identify, (2) remark, mention, interpose, (3) inform, apprise, tell, answer, rejoin, (3a) ask, (4) testify, report, swear, conjecture, doubt, know, believe, (5) accept, concede, withdraw, agree, demur(to), object (to), adhere (to), recognize, repudiate (5a) correct, revise, (6) postulate, deduce, argue, neglect, emphasize, (7) begin(by) , turn(to), conclude by, (7a) interpret, distinguish, analyse, define (7b) illustrate, explain, formulate, (7c) mean, refer, call , understand, regard (as).

**Searle's Typology of Speech Acts**

J.R. Searle classified the speech act verbs and grouped the different illocutionary acts into five basic types, which can be thought to be a modified form of Austin's classification. Searle says that, some of the English verbs denoting illocutionary acts are 'state', describe, assert, warn, remark, comment, command, order, request, criticize, apologize, censure, approve, welcome, promise, object, 'demand' and argue. According to Searle, one can perform only five basic kinds of actions in speaking and they are –

a) **Representatives or Assertives:** The speaker in these Speech Acts expresses the truth of the expressed proposition and they are basically assertions about a state of affairs or his or her belief. They can also reflect the subjective state of mind of the speaker. For example, 'It was a warm sunny day.' (Yule)

b) **Directives:** Speech acts which are undertaken by the speaker asking the listener to do something – gives a direction and thus are called Directives. Such Speech Acts include advice, order, requesting, questioning, begging, commanding and others. For example, Close the door., Could you lend me a pen please? (Yule, 1996: 54)

c) **Commissives:** Commissives are employed by the speaker if he commits himself to a certain course of action to be taken in the future. Such Speech

Acts include offer, pledges, refusals, promise, threats vows, warning, guaranteeing etc. Examples – 'I promise to pay you the money.' (Searle).

d) **Expressives:** Expressives are speech acts where the speaker expresses his or her feelings or the psychological state which is essentially subjective. Such Speech acts include, apologizing, welcoming, thank, congratulate, condole, deplore, and sympathizing, etc. Examples – 'Well done, Mary!' or 'I congratulate you on winning the race.' (Searle)

e) **Declaratives:** In these speech acts the external situation of the world are brought forward through utterances. For example, 'I declare this bridge to be opened.' (Searle, 1979).

f) Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

In general, it is thought that in English language, there are three basic sentence types (declarative, interrogative, imperative) which provide a fairly simple structural distinction between three general types of speech acts - statement, question, command or request. For example -

- Satya owns a big shop. (Declarative) - A declarative is used to make a statement
- What do you like to have for dinner? (Interrogative) - An interrogative is used to ask a question
- Come on, Rani, have another samosa! (Imperative) - An imperative is used to issuing a command or making a request.

It can be said that when there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function, it is a direct speech act. For example, when a question (interrogative) is asked for the sake of asking question then it is Direct Speech Act. But when an interrogative is asked to request something then it can be called an Indirect Speech Act. For example when someone says 'Will you close the door?' It is an indirect speech as through an interrogative, the person is requesting (doing an imperative function)

In other words, it can be said that a direct speech act has only one function, whereas an indirect speech act performs more than one function simultaneously. In indirect speech acts, one performs one illocutionary act while indirectly by way of performing a direct one. Indirect speech acts are cases in which one says one thing and means what he says and also means another illocution with a different propositional content. An indirect speech act is an utterance whose literal meaning is necessary but not enough to convey its full import. The meaning of a *Direct Speech Act* is more or less encoded in the literal meaning of utterance, whereas an *Indirect Speech Act* has an implied meaning.

### Co-operative Principle

Language is sometimes used to converse with oneself, but language is of more importance to use in its societal use, in the sense that it is mostly through language

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that we communicate with each other. And when we communicate there are certain codes that we have to follow to make our communication understandable to each other. Grice writes –

> 'Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, of cooperative efforts, and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction.'

According to Grice, when the speakers or participants are getting involved in a particular conversation then there has to be a direction of the whole conversation. Otherwise different people will carry on saying different things though they will not to conversing to each other as they will be talking about disconnected things which will not make sense to each other. It is true that the Parole is important but the parole should refer to the Langue all the times, otherwise the parole will remain senseless to other participants. Therefore, whenever a conversation is happening we have to always respect certain rules about it to make it a successful one. It is termed by Grice as Cooperative Principle, in which he proposed four Maxims or rules of conversation. Acting in accordance with these Maxims will, according to Grice, yield results consistent with the Cooperative Principle. The Maxims are –

- Maxim of Quantity
- Maxim of Quality
- Maxim of Relevance
- Maxim Of Manner

By Maxim of Quantity what Grice meant was the information that we provide in the process of a conversation. According to Grice, we should neither provide nor contribute more information than what is needed for the current conversation, nor should we provide less information that what is needed for a successful conversation. By Maxim of Quality is that ethical part of the conversation where we should nether say what we believe to be false and neither should we say something about which we lack adequate evidence. In other words, we should always base our statements on evidence and shouldn't say something just because we think it can be like that. The Maxim of relevance refers to the fact that when we are conversing, we should keep in mind never to speak anything that is not a part of the conversation. In other words, we should be relevant and to the point so that the conversation becomes a meaningful one. By Maxim of Manner Grice meant that we should avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity and be brief and orderly, that is we should be short, systematic and simple in our expressions so that the person in front of me gets the thing directly and has no problem in comprehending whatever I am saying.

Grice's four maxims are common sense things. Most of the times when we are in conversation, we keep in mind all these four factors usually. And when we don't keep it in mind, we usually are either not able to converse or the conversation

ends in a misunderstanding among the participants. Let us take an example to illustrate how the four maxims works in a conversation.

We are assuming that two friends Sachin and Saurav are meeting after a long time, and we are trying to form two sets of dialogues which can happen between them, first, where they are following the four maxims, and second when they are not following it.

**Sachin and Saurav following the four Maxims –**

Sachin – Hi, what's up? Where were you so many days?

Saurav – Hello, I was in Bombay. What about you. How are you doing?

Sachin – I am doing well and presently working in a call centre in Gurgaon, and what about you?

Saurav – I was working in an Ad Agency in Bombay. Left it and am searching for a job here.

Sachin – Ok. Take my Number – 98282367348. Be in contact. I am in a hurry now. Have to go. Do drop in to my place in the weekend.

Saurav – Surely, I will. See you then. Take care.

Sachin – Take care, bye

Saurav – Bye

**Sachin and Saurav not following the four Maxims –**

Sachin – . Hi, what's up? Where were you so many days?

Saurav – Hi. I was not in Delhi.

Sachin – How are you doing?

Saurav – Do you know any Ad Agency here?

Sachin – No. why?

Saurav – forget it.

Sachin – Let's go to have a coffee?

Saurav – where are you staying?

Sachin – (Feeling Disgusted) nearby. I am in hurry. See you. Bye.

Saurav – Bye.

In the first case, Sachin and Saurav, though they have met after a long time, they kept the four maxims of conversation in mind while speaking. They provided the exact information while talking; neither more than what is necessary, nor less. They neither said anything false and whatever they were saying was irrelevant. In the second case, their conversation was lacking the four maxims and therefore it ended in a way where though they met after a long time, still there was coldness in their relationship. In the second case Sachin was trying his best to get the

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conversation going in a particular direction, but Saurav's manner of speaking made him so bored with the whole conversation that he left it and went without ever having the intention to meet this person any more. In the first case we do find out as the conversation was well struck with the four Maxims therefore, they decide again to meet in the weekend.

Thus, we can say that though what Grice says in the four Maxims are the common sense thing but they are very important for any conversation to strike a successful note.

**Conversational Implicature**

Grice also formulated the theory of 'conversational implicature' which focuses on the implied meaning in an utterance. According to Grice, when the speaker flouts the co-operative principles, it can lead to the listeners taking out the hidden meaning from the utterance. Therefore, he suggested that Speakers use implicatures to convey the implied meaning which is known as conversational implicature. The different types of implicatures are –

- **Generalized Conversational Implicature:** Generalized Conversational Implicature 'arise irrespective of the context in which they occur' in the sense that in all contexts the meaning remains almost same.
- **Particularized Conversational Implicature:** Particularized Conversational implicature is 'derived not from the utterance alone, but from the utterance in context.' For example, if someone says 'We won' – The meaning is only clear in a particular context as a particular game is won.
- **Scalar Implicature:** In a scalar implicature 'certain information is always communicated by choosing a word which expresses one value from a scale of value.'(Yule). For example, if someone says 'I had some food' – Some refers to a particular amount in the scale.
- **Conventional Implicature:** Conventional implicature is 'associated with specific words and results in additional conveyed meaning when these words are used' (Yule). For example, if someone says 'Even Johar had coffee' – the word even is of mire significance as it suggests that it was an unusual case.

**Turn-taking**

During our conversations the people interacting usually take turns to make the conversation smoother. If everyone tries to speak at the same time, there will be no intelligibility of the conversation as it will only allow confusion. So in general, in human communication, people take turn to speak which is usually decided by the intention of the speaker. When the first speaker is on the verge of the completion, the second speaker takes up the conversation and as the second is about to end, the first reacts or the third person takes up. Thus, for smoother conversation, it is

essential that we take turns to speak and when someone is speaking we are silent and yet show our interest and attention to the speaker by listening.



### Adjacency Pair

Adjacency pair is the pair of utterances that generally come together, for example–

- 'question-answer',
- 'offer-acceptance',
- 'greeting-greeting' etc.

Whenever there is a question, the answer follows, or it may be a questioning of the question which is also a response. When an offer is made, the offer is only successful when it is accepted. Similarly, when we greet someone, another person greets back. Therefore, Malcolm Coulthard comments that 'adjacency pairs are normative structure, the second part ought to occur, and thus the other sequences are inserted between the first pair part that has occurred and the second pair part that is anticipated.'

### Discourse

English linguist M. A. K. Halliday talks about three functions of language – Ideational, Interpersonal and textual – 'The ideational function has to do with the transmission of a world-view, a structuring of experience; the interpersonal, with communicative intercourse, the establishment and maintenance of personal and group relationships; the textual, with the completeness and shape of a communicative unit, a text or utterance, within its context of situation.' For Roger Fowler, Literature serves all the three functions which have been talked about by Halliday.

Whereas Roman Jakobson merely tries to look at the syntactical features of language when he tries to look at poetry and says that poetic language is some kind of violence on common everyday speech. But that is only one aspect of language which cannot be taken as a whole when one is looking at interpreting literature. therefore Fowler suggests that all the three functions – ideational, interpersonal as well as textual need to be fulfilled by literature and when a critic is looking at any literary text from the point of view of language then it is necessary for him or her to look at all three functions of language to make sense the linguistic functions that the literary text serves.

Moreover, Fowler also refers to John Searle's revision of Austin's Speech acts which are divided into two – performative and constative utterances. Searle points out three aspects – 'every utterance is simultaneously three language acts. It is a locutionary act, that is, an utterance in the words and sounds of English, French, etc.; it is a propositional act, i.e. it attributes a property to a referent outside of language; and it is an illocutionary act, e.g. an act punctuational indicators of illocutionary actions – exclamations and questions - so a speech act approach is *prima facie* appropriate.' Fowler wants also to apply the theory of Austin-Searle in his interpretation of literature from the point of view of linguistics. And

when one does that one is immediately faced with the discourse of literature which is the aim of the critic to find out and give it to the readers and also for the readers to figure out by themselves.

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Fairclough, while defining a discourse says: 'Discourse' is for me more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice. … Discourse constitutes the social. Three dimensions of the social are distinguished – knowledge, social relations, and social identity – and these correspond respectively to three major functions of language...Discourse is shaped by relations of power and invested with ideologies.' (Fairclough 1992:28, 8) What Fairclough is pointing out here seems to be the aim of Roger Fowler too when he is aiming at the literary discourse from the point of view of the linguistic functions.

**Check Your Progress**

7. What is a locutionary act?
8. What can violations of felicity conditions lead to? Give an example.
9. What are some of the English verbs denoting illocutionary acts?
10. List the four maxims of the cooperative principle.
11. What is conventional implicature associated with?

## 14.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. To understand the meaning of a word, we can at least do two things:
   (i) Refer to a dictionary–which will give us the semantic meaning of the word.
   (ii) Refer to the context–which can often tell us what the speaker or the author intended to signify in the given context.
2. The whole concept in Leech's thesis rests on the distinction between meaningful and meaningless utterances in relation to 'the knowledge of language' and 'the knowledge of the real world'.
3. Lexical semantics can be defined as the 'study of word meaning' which is concerned with the study of lexical (i.e. content) word meaning, as opposed to the meanings of grammatical (or function) words.
4. Aristotle defines metaphor as a trope which "consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else, the transference being either from genres to species or from species to genres or from species to species or on grounds of analogy."
5. The essential quality of poetic language is its ability to defamiliarize or to make strange patterns of linguistic representation.

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6. In case of poetry, the poetic function gains supremacy over the referential function because the poem involves the organization of phonetic material not simply as a decoration signifying structures shared by poetic and non-poetic languages, but as signifying structure in itself.
7. A locutionary act is the act of saying something, it includes making noises of a certain type belonging to a certain vocabulary and conforming to the rules of a certain grammar, used with a more or less definite sense and reference.
8. Violations of the felicity conditions can lead to the performative being unhappy of infelicitous. For example, in a marriage ceremony, the bride cannot but say the exact words, "I do." She cannot choose to say "yes."
9. Some of the English verbs denoting illocutionary acts are 'state', describe, assert, warn, remark, comment, command, order, request, criticize, apologize, censure, approve, welcome, promise, object, 'demand' and argue.
10. The four maxims of the cooperative principle are –
    - Maxim of Quantity
    - Maxim of Quality
    - Maxim of Relevance
    - Maxim of Manner
11. Conventional implicature is "associated with specific words and results in additional conveyed meanings when these words are used" (Yule).

## 14.5 SUMMARY

- Linguistic semantics deals with the conventional meaning conveyed by the use of words, phrases and sentences of a language. In semantic analysis, what one focuses on is what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what an individual speaker might want them to mean on a particular occasion.
- Leech talks about the seven types of meaning: (a) Conceptual meaning (b) Connotative meaning (c) Social meaning (d) Affective meaning (e) Reflected meaning (f) Collocative meaning (g) Thematic meaning.
- Collocative meaning refers to 'the associations a word acquires on account of the meanings of words which tend to occur in its environment'.
- Lexical semantics can be defined as the 'study of word meaning' which is concerned with the study of lexical (i.e. content) word meaning, as opposed to the meanings of grammatical (or function) words.
- Superordinate terms (often also called 'hypernyms,' 'anaphoric nouns,' or 'discourse-organizing words') are nouns which can be used to describe a whole 'class' or group of things. Therefore, a superordinate term serves as an umbrella term that incorporates the sense of other terms within it.

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- When the meaning of one form of word is included in the meaning of the other, the relationship between the two words is described as hyponymy. For example, animal/dog, vegetable/carrot, flower/rose, tree/banyan.
- Polysemy can be described as one form (written or spoken) having multiple meanings that are all related by extension. Examples are the word 'head', used to refer to the object on top of your body, on top of a glass of beer, person at the top of a company or department, and many other things.
- One way in which we organize our vocabulary or knowledge of words is based on the words which frequently occur together. They are technically known as collocation.
- "Metaphor has always been defined as the trope of resemblance; not simply between signifier and signified but between what are already two signs; the one designating the other." – Jacques Derrida.
- Metaphor etymologically means "transporting" – transporting one word for another to give figurative quality to language.
- It is the relationship of the addresser and the code that the metaphorical axis comes into being in a major way because it is the addresser who first works in the selection process to form the message to be conveyed.
- In the *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud classified the dream as the disguised fulfilment of a suppressed or repressed wish. The two primary processes of transference from latent dreams to manifest are condensation and displacement.
- Jacques Lacan intrudes in between Jakobson and Freud, who states that metaphor is the superimposition of signifier and is linked with the substitution of surface meaning for repressed meaning.
- The essential quality of poetic language is its ability to defamiliarize or to make strange pattern of linguistic representation. Therefore, the poet's language ought to be metaphorical as it is that metaphorical quality of the poem which makes it more of a poem.
- The term *pragmatics* was proposed by Morris in 1938 to select a field of study of signs and their relationship to interpreters; whereas the term *semantics* was used to designate the more abstract study of the relationship between signs and the objects.
- According to Speech Acts Theory, whereas constatives can be judged as true or false, performatives can be felicitous or infelicitious depending on the conditions in which they are uttered.
- Commissives are "typified by promising or otherwise by undertaking, they commit you to do something", and the verbs associated with it are promise, covenant, contract, undertake, etc.

- Whenever a conversation is happening, we have to always respect certain rules about it to make it a successful one. It is termed by Grice as Cooperative Principle, in which he proposed four Maxims or rules of conversation.
- In a scalar implicature, “certain information is always communicated by choosing a word which expresses one value from a scale of value.” (Yule).
- Fairclough, while defining a discourse says: “Discourse’ is for me more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice. … Discourse constitutes the social.

## 14.6 KEY WORDS

- **Superordinate terms:** These are nouns that can be used to stand for an entire ‘class’ or ‘category’ of things. Thus, a superordinate term acts as an ‘umbrella’ term that includes within it the meaning of other words.
- **Hyponymy:** It refers to a relationship between two words where the meaning of one form of word is included in the meaning of the other. For example, animal/dog, vegetable/carrot.
- **Polysemy:** It is the capacity for a word or phrase to have multiple meanings, usually related by contiguity of meaning within a semantic field.
- **Metonymy:** It refers to the substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant, for example *suit* for *business executive*, or *the turf* for *horse racing*.
- **Collocation:** It is the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance.
- **Tautology:** It is the saying of the same thing twice over in different words, generally considered to be a fault of style (e.g. *they arrived one after the other in succession*).

## 14.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. Define the term ‘semantics’.
2. What is connotative meaning?
3. What are some of the ways in which variation of language can be studied in detail?
4. Write a short note on superordinate terms.
5. What are speech acts?

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6. Write a short note on exercitives.
7. What is indirect speech? Give an example.
8. What is particularized conversational implicature?
9. What are the Ideational, Interpersonal and textual functions of language related to?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the seven types of meaning as explained by Leech.
2. Analyse the concept of metonymy.
3. Elaborate upon the difference between the approaches of Freud and Jakobson with regard to linguistics.
4. Examine the differences between semantics and pragmatics.
5. Analyse the three acts favoured by Austin.
6. Discuss the concepts of behavitives and expositives as proposed by Searle.
7. Describe the five basic actions of speaking that one can perform, as per Searle.

## 14.8 FURTHER READINGS

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